

Wednesday February 4 1998

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The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

Polly Toynbee on ageism

Why baby-boomers should grow old gracefully

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The sublime and ridiculous world of Francis Bacon

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Society

How new housing plans penalise the poor

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Lottery chief ordered out

Blair call seals fate of second Branson victim

Kamal Ahmed and Ewen MacAskill

RICHARD Branson's four-year campaign to change the way the National Lottery is run last night claimed its second victim inside 24 hours with the forced resignation of its regulator, Peter Davis.

Mr Davis began the day with a series of television and radio interviews in which he brushed aside calls for his resignation. He said he would spend the next few weeks reviewing the operation of the lottery following the ousting of Guy Snowden, the American businessman found guilty of trying to bribe Mr Branson.

But as the political pressure mounted and hints came from government spokesmen that Mr Davis's position was less than secure, the director general of Oflot was summoned to an emergency meeting with Culture Secretary Chris Smith.

Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, had telephoned Mr Smith minutes before the meeting to make it clear that Mr Davis should go.

Four hours after Mr Davis arrived for the showdown in Whitehall, amid chaotic scenes with jostling cameramen, Mr Smith announced the inevitable: Mr Davis was out.

Mr Smith said Mr Davis no longer had the confidence of the public. "In view of the likelihood of continuing controversy surrounding the running of the National Lottery in the wake of the Branson libel case, and in order to ensure that public confidence in the lottery is maintained, Mr Davis felt it was right to



Peter Davis confronted by the media as he arrived for the meeting with Culture Secretary Chris Smith which ended with his resignation as Lottery regulator. PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

tender his resignation as director general of the National Lottery," Mr Smith said.

"In accepting his resignation, I would stress that there is no question mark whatsoever against Mr Davis' integrity and I am very grateful for the significant personal contribution he has made to making the lottery a success."

Mr Davis's resignation was immediately welcomed by Mr Branson, who said that Mr Snowden's company, G-Tech, which is a 22.5 per cent shareholder of lottery operator Camelot, should now be put under the greatest scrutiny.

"Above all else the National Lottery must have the confidence of the British people," Chris Smith has acted decisively and has taken an important first step towards restoring that confidence.

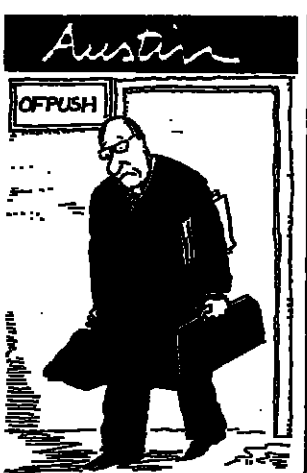
"Now a new director general must address the difficult

issue of extracting G-Tech from the lottery. For, despite the impression that Mr Davis and Camelot were giving yesterday, G-Tech themselves were found guilty in the High Court not just their director Mr Snowden.

"I also believe that a full investigation of the whole bidding process of 1994 and Mr Davis's role in the decision to give G-Tech a clean bill of health needs to be instigated.

"In the longer term, I believe that good will come out of the events of yesterday and today and that this government will make sure that the licence for our lottery is never again awarded in the same way as it was last time."

Robert Sheldon, chairman of the Commons Public Accounts Committee which criticised Mr Davis for taking free flights from G-Tech during a visit to America, also



welcomed the move. "It is unfortunate he [Mr Davis] did not take this action some time ago when the committee reported."

Mr Smith said that John Stoker, the deputy director of Oflot, which has sole responsibility for policing the lottery, would take over from Mr Davis until a permanent replacement could be found.

He said Mr Stoker's first priority would be to investigate G-Tech's continuing involvement with Camelot. "I will continue to take a personal interest in the progress of this work to ensure that there's an outcome which is acceptable to the British people," he said.

Earlier, Mr Davis, while still clinging to his £84,000-a-year job said: "If Mr Branson had come to me and given me some evidence of wrongdoing at an earlier stage, I could have taken action at an earlier stage," he said.

"I would emphasise that this was an action between two individuals, it was not

about the running of the lottery itself, and there is no reason at all why the British people should lose confidence in the lottery."

The decision on Mr Davis's future was made after an hour but the director general asked for the announcement to be delayed so that he could telephone his wife and other members of his family. Mr Davis left by a back door and made no comment.

Ofot later said that he would not be adding more to what the Secretary of State had said.

Michael Fabricant, the Conservative MP and member of the Commons Culture Select Committee, accused Mr Smith of using Mr Davis as a scapegoat.

Questions were still being asked last night about how Mr Snowden would be distanced from the profits made

'I shall be watching very carefully and talking with Camelot and G-Tech to see whether they should continue to play a role in the National Lottery'

Peter Davis, Bam yesterday

'Chris Smith has taken an important first step towards restoring confidence. Now a new director general must address the difficult issue of extracting G-Tech from the lottery. For G-Tech themselves were found guilty in the High Court, not just their director Mr Snowden'

Richard Branson

'I welcome Mr Davis's readiness to put the public reputation of the lottery before his own personal position'

Chris Smith

Leader comment, page 5; Jonathan Freedland and Clare Sambrook, page 9

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20 killed as jet slices cable car wires

Passengers at Italian ski resort plunge to deaths on valley floor

John Hooper in Rome

A LOW-FLYING jet yesterday slashed through the wires supporting an alpine cable car lift, sending at least 20 people plunging to their deaths in the valley below.

Rescue teams were last night working under arc lights to remove the bodies from the mangled yellow car near the ski resort of Cavalese. All but one of the victims were said to be foreign tourists. None of the crew of the United States military aircraft was hurt.

Policeman Robert Cavada in Cavalese said at least six of the victims were Germans.

RAI state television said two were Hungarian, and two Polish. Amid claims that the pilot had tried unsuccessfully to fly beneath the cables, a political storm broke in Rome. Communist and Green MPs called for the closure of US bases in Italy.

The accident took place on the first leg of the cable lift, which rises three miles to the peak of Monte Cermis in the Dolomites. This was also the scene of Italy's worst cable car accident in 1976, in which more than 40 people lost their lives.

The aircraft - a Grumman Prowler packed with electronic warfare equipment - ripped through the cables of

the lift in mid-afternoon. The car on which the victims were travelling fell more than 300 feet.

According to one report, the plane actually brushed the car. But a local hotelier told the news agency Ansa last night that the plane hit the cables with its tail fin as it flew under them. US sources confirmed that the aircraft had suffered minor damage to the tail.

A Cavalese fireman said: "I saw the aircraft go to and fro at very low level. They do it every day and we have protested on numerous occasions, but with no result. Sooner or later something like this had to happen."

Another cable car, with only an operator on board, was left dangling above the mountainside after the accident triggered the system's

turn to page 3, column 1



Rescuers at Cavalese survey the mangled wreckage of the cable car. PHOTOGRAPH: PANATO

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Britain
Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools, warned of a 'glaring gap' in the quality of teaching provided for eight-year-olds.

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Sanctions imposed on 1,000 historic, cultural and religious buildings in Bosnia.

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Sketch

Missing the joke in six easy steps



Simon Hoggart

TORIES claim to find something irresistibly funny about Glenda Jackson. Partly it's jealousy; they don't like to think that someone wealthy, successful and even glamorous should be on the other side.

With her two Oscars, Ms Jackson, who is the Labour MP for Hampstead, brings a whiff of stretch limousines, white tuxedos and champagne parties. No-one will ever ask Norman Fowler to mould his handprint at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. No-one will ever pin a star on the dressing room of Christopher Chope.

But mainly, I think, it's the contrast between her image as a sassy, sexy, wise-cracking film star and the earnest sobriety she brings to her work as a minister. In her public life, she lacks a sense of humour, and there are few human qualities which are quite as comical as that.

Yesterday she was answering questions in her role as junior transport minister. Anne Campbell (Lab, Cambridge) asked what steps she was taking to improve facilities for pedestrians.

"I," she said solemnly, "chair the Walking Steering Group."

Tories hugged themselves with glee. "The Walking Steering Group?" one or two of them repeated, with Bertie Woosterish brays.

Ms Jackson looked up disapprovingly. "The Walking Steering Group will help local authorities in the integration of walking with other transport modes."

The Tories couldn't help it. Some of them began to shake with laughter, and I felt quite tickled myself. It's the jargon, reflecting the desperate desire among people with just a little bit of power over our lives to turn the simplest human activity, such as placing one foot in front of another, into some-

thing vague, intangible and pompous.

How do you integrate walking with other transport modes? By putting bus stops on streets instead of in the middle of railway junctions? You could try connecting one pavement with another to form an Fully Integrated Community-wide Pedestrian Transport Infrastructure. Or you could merge walking with air travel by, for example, building gangways from the terminal to the plane.

The possibilities are limitless. No wonder Ms Jackson said proudly that the Government was proposing to spend £85 million on walking in the next financial year — a sum of money sufficient, though she did not say this, to buy a pair of tip-toes for every man woman and child in Britain.

It wasn't over. Thomas Brake (Lib Dem, Carshalton) called attention to the lack of a "national strategy on walking". The Tories, who had been bubbling gently for a few minutes, now began to wheeze dangerously. Like an old-fashioned steam engine on the point of exploding.

Instead of replying thus: "What in the name of the Lord is a national strategy on walking? Are we supposed to put videos through every letter-box to show people how to do it? Do you want Walking Awareness Weeks in schools? How about a Walking Ethnic Outreach Programme Director in every borough (£56,000 pa plus car?)" — the answer to all those is probably yes — she replied with the same grave solemnity: "In my talks with the Walking Steering Group I understand that there is a shared agenda and it is possible to move forward."

This was all much, too much for the Tories, who began to collapse. "Move forward!" they chortled. But Ms Jackson was not finished. Rosie Winterton (Doncaster C) mentioned the fury of people walking through thick clouds of smoke from decrepit old vehicles.

"Yes, traffic commissioners should publish Smokey Hot Lines," said Ms Jackson.

Ah, Smokey Hot-Lines, the great country singer whose hit "Ah Belch Ma Onion Supper While Ma Rig Is Belching Smoke" reached number 37 in the C&W chart some years ago.

With ethnic tension high, the Prince of Wales is attending anniversary events at some personal risk. But when the band struck up the Monty Python theme and he departed for his first engagement — to an underwear factory — the tune seemed strangely appropriate

Luke Harding in Sri Lanka



Charles arrives at the Buddhist Raja Maha Viharaya temple on the outskirts of Colombo

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN STILLWELL

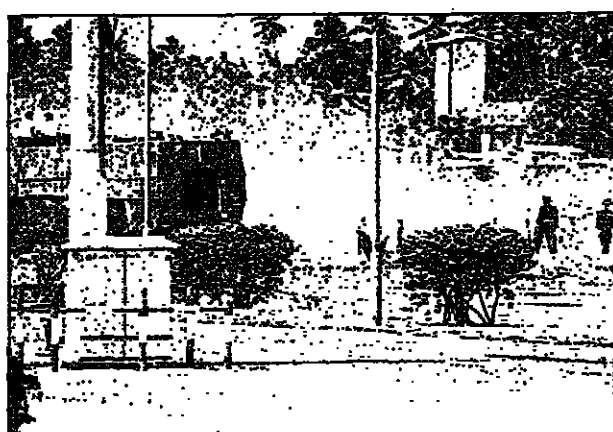
Charles abroad: A fire, a stray dog and then something completely different

IT WAS Harold Macmillan who remarked that politicians were at the mercy of events. So too heirs to the throne. As he stood to attention in the blow-torch Sri Lankan heat, yesterday, Prince Charles could have been forgiven for marvelling at the tricks destiny can play.

It was not his fault that a stray dog should go scurrying past just as a welcoming band at Colombo airport began a sombre rendition of God Save the Queen. Nor could he have anticipated that the 21-gun salute to his left, booming across the runway into the palm trees, should ignite an embarrassingly large fire.

A fire engine trundled out from its hangar and doused the surrounding grass with foam, as the prince stoically inspected a guard of honour. When the band then struck up the Liberty Bell, also known as the theme music to Monty Python's Flying Circus, and the prince departed for his first official engagement — to an underwear factory — the tune seemed strangely appropriate.

Even before he had embarked on his four-day tour of Sri Lanka, where he will attend celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of independence, much of his trip had been jettisoned. Ten days ago Tamil suicide bombers penetrated security surrounding the island's holiest Buddhist shrine, the Temple of



Firefighters douse a blaze started by the 21-gun salute

the Tooth, and killed 16 people. Large chunks of the prince's itinerary were then dumped for security reasons.

"The nuts have gone," one diplomat said on Monday night, en route from RAF Brize Norton to Colombo, referring to a proposed visit to a cashew factory, now deemed too great a risk.

Arthur C Clarke, meanwhile, the futurist guru whom the prince was to have knighted later today, pulled out of the investiture ceremony after becoming embroiled in tabloid allegations of child sex. He denies the claims and is holed up with his lawyers.

But after a wobbly start, the tour took off with more cer-

tainy yesterday afternoon. First stop was a clothing factory which churns out knickers and Y-fronts for Marks and Spencer. A perfect example of British investment; also a good opportunity for a cringe-making quip. The prince said he was grateful for the support the factory was giving Britain. The laughter was polite.

Next, a 17th century Buddhist temple, the Raja Maha Viharaya, on Colombo's outskirts. Buddha came here himself once, legend has it, and left his cloak behind. Undoubtedly he was accompanied by fewer security guards.

The prince took off his shoes and walked inside. He then laid a tray of rose petals before a statue of the divinity. With the exception of a minority of hard line Buddhists who blame the British for importing Tamils from mainland India to work the tea plantations and thus creating Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, most people are genuinely pleased to see the prince.

"I'm very happy Prince Charles is coming. This is a very happy day for us," said T. Dhammananda, aged 33, a monk and Sanskrit student.

For 15 minutes the prince chatted to the venerable Mahinda Sangharakkhita, the temple's head monk. Was it difficult to meditate, the prince asked. And how do you become a saint? The answer, according to the monk, had nothing to do with Diana, Princess of Wales, whose sainthood is now beyond question. Instead sainthood is conferred on those who are "virtuous", it was made clear.

What did the monk think of Britain's future king? Was he a spiritual chap? "His outward look shows me he is a fully developed person mentally," he replied.

Then the prince was whisked away to Colombo, Sri Lanka's heavily fortified capital. Road blocks are everywhere; security is tight in anticipation of the formal independence day parade later today.

The threat of Tamil suicide bombers permeates almost all areas of the city's life. But on the plane earlier it was obvious the prince was not going to let personal risk put him off.

"Have you got your bullet-proof vests?" he quipped to journalists before admitting: "I don't know why we are doing this." The defence attaché back in Britain had told him there was nothing to worry about. "It's lunatic," he grinned.

Review

Characters lost in the wood

Andrew Clements

Die Walküre

Netherlands Opera, Amsterdam

WHEN Das Rheingold launched Netherlands Opera's Ring cycle at the Amsterdam Muziektheater last September, it was immediately clear from the massive, hi-tech design that no expense would be spared on what is the first complete cycle to be staged in Holland.

With Die Walküre, which opened at the weekend, the galloping consumption continues; where most Rings these days have at least a basic concept, and the production ideas there were like making Wotan collapse to the ground at the end of the second act when he should be furiously chasing after Brunnhilde, giving the Valkyries chromium-plated wings as if they were a flock of pigeons, and having flames on stage at the beginning rather than the end of the third act, seemed totally out of kilter.

With the right musical values, though, any Ring performance can still be stirring, and a cast that included a first-rate Siegmund in Nadine Secunde, promisingly musical Siegmund from John Keyes, and Jeannine Altmeyer as Brunnhilde, could have come good, even if John Brucheler's Wotan remains rather stolid.

But Hartmut Haenchen's conducting was so lacking in vision, and the orchestral playing so underpowered, that all one could do most of the time was boggle at the set, and imagine the cash registers running out of nougats.

The visual spectacle served up is mind-blowing, but it's no

real satisfaction to discover that in every other respect this Walküre was mediocre. The epic dimension that such a setting should have fostered is conspicuously lacking in Audis direction: he seems to have set out to use the extraordinary spaces that Tyspin supplies in as passionless a way as possible.

It's hard to make the first act between Siegmund and Siegmunde as cool as it was here; impossible, one would have thought, to leave the audience dry-eyed during Wotan's Farewell. The characters here really were insignificant cogs in an impersonal machine, and what production ideas there were like making Wotan collapse to the ground at the end of the second act when he should be furiously chasing after Brunnhilde, giving the Valkyries chromium-plated wings as if they were a flock of pigeons, and having flames on stage at the beginning rather than the end of the third act, seemed totally out of kilter.

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John Keyes, 'promisingly musical' in the role of Siegmund, and Jeannine Altmeyer as Brunnhilde

Warning to Iraq as talks on weapons crisis go on

Ian Black Diplomatic Editor

IRAQ was last night warned of "grave consequences" for the standoff over United Nations weapons inspectors, as French, Turkish and Arab envoys joined Russian mediators urging Baghdad to back down and avoid American-led airstrikes.

President Boris Yeltsin's personal envoy, Viktor Posoluyuk, already negotiating in the Iraqi capital, was joined by Bertrand Dufourcq, a senior French Foreign Ministry official, carrying "concrete suggestions" for a way out of the escalating crisis.

The secretary-general of the Arab League, Ismet Abdel-Maguid, criticised the US and Britain for threatening Iraq, before departing himself for Baghdad. Turkey's foreign minister, Ismail Cem, is also due there today.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, meanwhile, had what the Iraqi News Agency called a "very con-

structive" telephone conversation with the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

Agreement by France and Russia, both opposed to attacks, is a mirror image of the close co-ordination between the US and Britain, who say they will use force if diplomatic efforts fail.

Tony Blair, sensitive to criticism that he is following Bill Clinton's lead, said before leaving for Washington: "This isn't Britain linking itself with US policy. This is British policy. We want Saddam Hussein dealt with."

Underlining the common approach, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, is planning to fly to the Gulf to persuade the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to provide what officials called "support and understanding" if military action is necessary.

Mr Cook will be following the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, who completed her Middle East tour in Egypt, saying: "A diplomatic solution is preferable but I am sceptical about it."

Mrs Albright persuaded Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain to pin the blame for the impasse on Iraq, but Saudi Arabia stopped short of granting US planes use of their bases for possible air strikes.

Britain is also pursuing a new resolution at the United Nations to put Iraq "on notice" that it must comply with UN resolutions on disarmament. The US says there can be military action without a new resolution.

Foreign Office officials made clear Britain was still hoping for a negotiated end to the crisis, but emphasised that proposals made by Iraq to Russia were not adequate.

At issue is Iraq's refusal to open up so-called "presidential sites" to UN weapons inspectors. It insists it has destroyed all the weapons banned under the terms of the ceasefire which ended the 1991 Gulf War. But the UN and individual member states say this is a lie.

Ranting lord of the joyful martyrs, page 6

Boys cleared of rape of girl aged 9

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

TWO boys aged 10, who were charged with raping a girl of nine during the lunch break at their primary school, were yesterday formally acquitted at the Old Bailey. They still face indecent assault charges.

The trial judge, Mrs Justice Bracewell, instructed the jury to return verdicts of not guilty on both rape charges. She also told them to acquit a third boy, also 10, who was accused of acting as a lookout and who had been facing a charge of indecent assault.

The continuing trial for indecent assault of the two boys cleared of rape and a third boy, now aged 11, charged with the same offence, is due to finish by Friday. All three pleaded not guilty.

The four had been charged following an incident in the boys' toilets of a west London primary school on May 6 last year. A fifth boy allegedly involved was not charged because, at nine, he was below the age of legal responsibility.

The judge said she was instructing the jury to return not guilty verdicts on rape for two reasons. First, the alleged victim, who is now 10, had not positively identified one of the accused. "But there is a much more fundamental flaw in the evidence," said the judge. "When [the girl] was interviewed and video-recorded by the policewoman, she was interviewed for some 45 minutes. Throughout that interview she did not make any allegation of rape and the policewoman left the room at a time when, to all intents and purposes, the interview had ended."

The policewoman returned and then asked a question that was both leading and wholly improper, which, in effect, put words into the girl's mouth.

The judge also said it would be wrong to proceed against the boy accused of acting as lookout. There had been evidence of his distress and of his express wish that the girl should not be hurt because she was his friend. There had also been a lack of evidence of his participation.

Summing up for one of the boys, defence counsel Steven Kay QC said the girl had been "indulging in horseplay of a sexual nature" with the boys in the toilet.

"Children of this age can mislead dreadfully," said Mr Kay. She was a girl "not without experience of sexual matters. This is not something we are happy about at all."

The court had heard that she had been sexually abused when she was younger by a neighbour in Jamaica.

Mr Kay also told the jury that the girl had spoken of a "spirit" talking to her during the night.

The girl's headmistress had said she had had difficulty telling if the girl was being truthful or not, said Mr Kay. The case continues today.

GOING UNDERGROUND

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10 Preston North End

Turkeys

84 Cardiff City
85 Peterborough Utd
86 Tottenham Hotspur
87 Chester City
88 Oxford
89 Wembley
90 Wrexham
91 Bristol City
92 Swansea City
93 Leyton Orient

Stadium caterers score an own goal

John Duncan
Sports Correspondent

WHILE English football boasts about its 21st century stadiums, many of its supporters still eat food in them that belongs somewhere in the 17th century. BC, says the first Colman's Football Food Guide, published yesterday.

The guide, which features a section on every league ground as well as Wembley, is scathing about the quality of food they offer. "If by turning the critical spotlight on football food," said Jim White, who edited the guide, "we might be able to effect the same improvements that Egon Ronay set in train when he assaulted British pub food in the 1970s... the damage inflicted on our stomach linings will no doubt have been worth it."

The researchers visited the grounds in the first four months of the season, sampling 323 pies, 186 hot dogs, 291 burgers and 144 portions of chips to compile the 130 page report. "All we wanted was good food, well-cooked and served quickly enough to allow us to catch most of the second half," said Mr White. "What we found was often depressingly bland, with some clubs' offerings unacceptably poor."

The report also collected supporters' tales of nightmare catering at football grounds, including one food vendor who urinated against a wall, then went back to serving food without washing his hands, and

the supporter who asked what the vegetarian option was and was told: "You can chew on a spoon if you like". The food on offer at Leyton Orient finished bottom of the survey.

The publishers also made awards to three clubs for their excellent catering, with Cambridge United rated as the best in the country, followed by Huddersfield and Rochdale. Cambridge won particular accolades for their bacon rolls. "A lot of clubs don't offer bacon rolls, but we find they're just about the most popular thing," said the commercial manager, Carla Frediani. "We make a point of putting two rashers in instead of one, and we always go for back bacon, cooked in the griddle in its own juices to seal the flavour in. I'm a vegetarian but even I get tempted."

Wembley comes under fierce attack. The food was described as "awful". It was also criticised for its prices — £2.20 for a chicken burger, and £2.30 for a Coke. A Wembley spokesman described their rating as "ridiculous".

"We take all criticism on board and learn from it," he said. "The food is not produced on a whim. It is based on extensive research. We believe that it provides good value."

The football commentators John Motson recalled Wembley's traditional reputation for bad food yesterday. "Before an England match, Trevor Brooking and I had a little routine where he went for hot dogs and I got the teas in. I was



PSV Eindhoven fans sampling British cuisine at Newcastle, placed 38th in the food league

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

sick for the whole game after the hot dog and for two days afterwards."

The research was particularly embarrassing for Della Smith, a director of Norwich City, placed 61st in the list. Mrs Smith was not available for comment last

night but a spokeswoman said: "She is not responsible for the food. It is obviously an area she is very interested in but she has only been a director for just over a year. At the moment everyone at the club is very focused on the team."



the hand, luke-warm in poor bread, the sausage itself watery, floury, anything but meaty. The one we bought was such an emaciated impoverished thing it

seemed a crime to eat it. So we didn't."

Manchester City: "Sad pies with pastry like newly pasted wallpaper."

Chelsea: "The regally named Chelsea char-grilled chicken steak had a curious metallic taste muffled by a cold, hard heavy bun. The chicken and mushroom pie was largely uncooked, with the frothy sauce dribbling out of the soggy casing and the chicken more like polystyrene than poultry."

"We also sampled the veggie burger, which was truly inedible, like biting into warm pulpy butter. The onions had been stacked under cooked burgers... not every veggie's dream."

Congo blood sample sheds new light on Aids history

Tim Radford
Science Editor

THE first hard evidence that Aids began in Africa has been found in a blood sample taken from an patient in the Congo in 1959.

The discovery pushes back by more than a decade the history of a disease that has so far infected 30 million people and claimed 5 million lives. It is evidence of a mutation that infected one single human perhaps five decades ago, and which spread quietly in Africa before suddenly becoming a worldwide nightmare.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) now infects someone every 20 seconds.

The origin of HIV has been a subject of sometimes angry debate since it was found among homosexual men and then drug users in the early 1980s.

In the first years, there were claims that it was a virus that escaped from a military germ warfare experiment, or that it arose from polio vaccination programmes.

Others have argued that the disease began with animals: cats have their own version, and an infection native to some African apes and mon-

keys could have spread into the human population.

Although first reports of the mysterious infection came from the gay community in California, it became clear that it had an older history. Samples taken from a Norwegian family between 1971 and 1976 showed they had a virus related to the kind of HIV infection found in West Africa.

Now a team from the Aaron Diamond Aids research centre at the Rockefeller university in New York has gone deeper into the past of the disease. Out of more than 1,200 blood samples taken in Africa between 1959 and 1982, only one turned out to be HIV positive by all tests.

It was taken in 1959 from a Bantu man with sickle cell anaemia, who was working at the time in what was then Leopoldville, in the Belgian Congo. The researchers will report in Nature tomorrow that they examined the genetic make-up of the 1959 HIV sample, and placed it early in the human history of the disease.

"The major group viruses that at present dominate the global Aids pandemic shared a common ancestor in the 1940s or early 1950s," they write. "The factors that propelled the initial spread of HIV-1 in central Africa remain unknown."

Anxious children fret about parents' unhealthy lifestyle

Sarah Hall

NEARLY half the nation's children (44 per cent) suffer anxieties because of their parents' health. Smoking is frowned upon, drinking disapproved — and they wish they would eat fresh fruit and vegetables.

The research, published today by the British Heart Foundation, was based on interviews with over 500 children aged 10-16 across Britain, and across the social spectrum. It found children from poorer families were more likely to worry about their parents' health than those from middle class homes (58 per cent compared to 40 per cent).

Six out of 10 children in the South were anxious about their parents' health compared with 48 per cent in the North.

Across the nation, smoking was a source of anxiety, with those whose parents smoked being far more likely to worry than those with non-smoking parents (54 per cent compared with 34 per cent).

Drink was also a bone of contention, with 34 per cent worrying that their parents drank too much — a figure which rose to 29 per cent in poorer social groups.

Parental diets came in for criticism with 54 per cent thinking their families should eat more fruit and vegetables, and a quarter blaming a fondness for takeaway meals.

Lack of exercise and overwork also caused anxiety.

Maxine Smith, of the foundation, which launches an improve your lifestyle campaign today, said: "This may mean the healthy lifestyle messages are getting through to young people."



The parents of Lakhvinder (Ricky) Reel with a picture of their son

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

Drowned Asian student's family seek new inquiry into his death

Lucy Patton

THE family of a student who drowned shortly after a racial attack is appealing for a fresh investigation after an independent pathologist's report concluded that a third party could have been involved in his death.

Lakhvinder Reel, known as Ricky, went missing in Kingston, Surrey, on October 14 last year after he and three friends were involved in a fight with two white men. His body was found a week later in the Thames.

Police concluded his death was an accident, but Mr Reel's family and friends have insisted that police did not take into account a possible racial element.

The Police Complaints Authority is investigating the police reaction to Mr Reel's death, but their original inquiries concluded that the 20-year-old student had fallen into the river while urinating and died instantly.

Buttons were undone on Mr Reel's trousers when he was found and police used this to support the theory that he had been relieving himself on the river bank.

But the independent report, written by Freddie Patel from the department of forensic medicine at Guy's hospital, London, found Mr Reel had a full bladder when he died and says that there were many more convenient sites in which to urinate.

This was backed up by Sukhdev Reel, Ricky's mother, who said her son had a phobia about open water, although he was a strong swimmer.

The pathologist's report, written after a second post mortem examination and a visit to the site, concluded: "The post mortem features of the lungs are consistent with a survival period of some duration in the water and a struggle to breathe. There is nothing to suggest the deceased would have lost consciousness immediately, and it is possible that an attempt to swim could have been made."

After Mr Reel, a Brunel university student, went missing following a night out with three Asian friends, his family and friends began investigating as they felt the police were not taking action.

Mr Reel's friends said they were racially abused by two white men and a fight fol-

lowed. Mr Reel went off in a different direction to his friends and they never saw him again.

When police told Mrs Reel to wait 24 hours to see if her son returned, relatives began a search of the area, produced "missing" posters, and visited stores to watch security videos.

The police found Mr Reel's body seven days later, in 10ft of water.

The new report, released yesterday, found: "The significant injuries were mainly on the back, consistent with blunt impact(s) of the back against hard surface on the river bed."

Dr Patel suggests: "The body could have fallen into the water backwards."

Mr Reel's family is concerned that police have not released any visual images or E-fits of the alleged racial abusers. The Justice for Ricky Reel campaigners are urging police to stage a reconstruction of the incident.

At a press conference yesterday, Mrs Reel of West Drayton, Middlesex, said: "The pain of losing my son is unbearable, but the pain is amplified by the fact that I don't know how my son met his death."

Louise Christian, solicitor acting for the Reel family, urged the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to open a fresh inquiry. "This report casts very grave doubts on the assumption that this was an accidental death."

Suresh Grover, of the Justice for Ricky Reel campaign, said they want Mr Straw to install a fresh team of police officers to investigate Mr Reel's death.

John McDonnell, the Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, has raised the issue twice in the Commons. He said yesterday: "We will maintain pressure on the Home Secretary."

A Metropolitan police spokesman said yesterday: "The inquiry into Ricky Reel's death has never been closed." He added that the police had seen copies of the new pathologist's report and they felt it occurred with the original post mortem. "It is not a murder investigation because we have no evidence of any third party in the death."

A formal submission has been made to the public inquiry re-examining the stabbing of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 to examine Ricky Reel's death.

News in brief

Bid for World Cup medal

A WEALTHY German woman is trying to buy the World Cup winner's medal awarded to the 1966 hero, George Cohen, by offering £100,000 for it before it goes to auction.

The offer was relayed to the former full-back by his agent, Dave Davies, who said yesterday: "Naturally George would prefer it to stay in England."

After Mr Cohen, 57, announced he was selling his medal to boost his pension fund, it was reported that the one given to England's captain, the late Bobby Moore, was also for sale.

Murder remand at Broadmoor

DANIEL Joseph, 18, of no fixed address, appeared before a magistrate sitting inside Broadmoor hospital yesterday charged with murdering Carla Thompson, 57, and attempting to murder Agnes Erume, in her 60s.

The Camberwell Green stipendiary magistrate, Brian

Loosley, remanded Joseph in custody for a month

Mrs Thompson and Mrs Erume, who is in a "stable" condition at King's College hospital, London, were found battered in the street in Tulsa Hill, south-east London, on January 22. During yesterday's 10-minute hearing, a sign language expert interpreted the proceedings for Joseph, who is a deaf.

Baby death pair were due to wed

PAULA Oakley and Jason Hadley, whose baby son, Ceum, died after falling from their Range Rover, were due to be married this weekend, a relative said yesterday.

Derbyshire police said it was understood the boy fell from his mother's lap after the front passenger door opened as the elderly car turned a sharp corner in the Allenton area of Derby on Monday.

Ms Oakley had taken 19-month-old Ceum from the back seat because he was crying, police said.

Experts are examining the vehicle to find out how the boy could have fallen out.



Millions rush for Diana stamps

THE launch of stamps commemorating the life of Diana, Princess of Wales (above), sparked one of busiest trading days in Post Office history yesterday.

Post Offices throughout the UK had taken on extra staff to cope with the rush and "tens of millions" of the five 2p stamps, each showing portraits of Diana by leading photographers, had been sold, a Post Office spokesman said.

Envoy apologises to Falklander

ARGENTINA'S ambassador in London yesterday apologised to a Falklands farming couple after hearing their land was still plagued by explosive boobytraps 16 years after the South Atlantic conflict.

At a London conference on the dispute, Norma Edwards, an islands councillor who farms 2,000 acres, said: "We found three boobytraps with trip wires only last week."

The Argentine ambassador, Rogelio Filmer, said: "I am sorry for it". He added that Argentina would see if it could supply further information on where mines were laid in 1982.

Columnist's gay censure

THE Press Complaints Commission has upheld a complaint against columnist Anne Atkins for failing to distinguish between comment, conjecture and fact over her assertion in the Sun that gay men have a shorter life expectancy and are more likely to be paedophiles.

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healthy lifestyle

City and East London
Nine hundred bed
Royal London hospital for
Whitechapel to be built
Bart's to become
specialist unit
Oldchurch, Romford,
to be rebuilt; Harold
Wood to close

South-east London
Closure of Guy's
A & E department to go
ahead
Development of St
Thomas' hospital to be
scaled down
More services likely to
stay at Guy's

South-west London
Queen Mary's, Roehampton, to be reduced
to community hospital
Rationalisation of At-
kinson Morley, Wimble-
don, and St George's,
Tooting, to continue

West London
Hammersmith to be
developed as interna-
tional centre of
excellence
Transfer of Queen
Charlotte's to Ham-
mersmith to go ahead
Integration of Ham-
mersmith and Charing
Cross to be accelerated

North London
New University Col-
lege hospital to go ahead,
incorporating Middlesex
Whittington to be
redeveloped



Bart's hospital, founded in the 12th century, it will continue to treat patients as a specialist centre for cancer and heart conditions. However, its accident and emergency department will not reopen, and closure of the A&E unit at Guy's hospital, in south London, is also to go ahead, together with the running down of Queen Mary's, Roehampton

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN ARGLES

Bart's hospital granted a reprieve

Campaigners are jubilant but A&E unit will close as part of a wide-ranging health review

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

THE historic St Bartholomew's hospital in the City of London will be saved, ministers declared yesterday.

They accepted the recommendations of an indepen-

dent review of the capital's "under pressure" health services.

Bart's, founded in the 12th century, will continue to treat patients as a specialist centre for cancer and heart conditions.

However, it will lose its role as a general local hospital, and its accident and emergency department will not

reopen. Among other decisions emerging from the review are closure of the A&E unit at Guy's hospital, south London, is to go ahead, and Queen Mary's hospital, Roehampton, will be run down and replaced by a small community unit.

The review, headed by Sir Leslie Turnbull, a past president of the Royal College of Physicians, was set up by Labour to help it deal with issues that had bedevilled the last government.

Frank Dobson, Health Secretary yesterday told the Commons that the review's proposals were accepted in

full. "The Turnbull report recommends that Bart's should not close. The Government agrees. Bart's will be saved. We will not countenance the closure of that great hospital which has served the people of London for 675 years."

Closure of Bart's was proposed by the Tomlinson report in 1992 and set in train the following year by the Conservative government. The A&E department has shut and its other services were due to transfer to the Royal London in Whitechapel.

The review says that this should still happen once a

new, 900-bed Royal London is built in seven or eight years' time, but that Bart's should thereafter provide "a small number of tertiary services" and perhaps also run a minor injuries unit.

Campaigners who have been battling to save Bart's welcomed the decision — even though it fell far short of their original goal.

Dorrie Snell, who chairs the Save Bart's Patients' Campaign, said: "The hospital has always been excellent in heart specialists — in fact it is best in the world. I am now very optimistic about the hospital's future."

Ray Pett, chief executive of the Royal Hospitals trust which runs Bart's and the Royal London, and which is heavily in the red, said he was relieved that uncertainty surrounding the decisions was over. But he remained concerned about funding.

The review says there is a need to rebuild confidence in health care in London, with the emphasis on services for Londoners rather than "services that happen to be in London".

In east London, it argues, the priority for local people is to adopt voluntary tests at nine to keep this key generation of pupils up to the mark.

Homerton hospital, Hackney, and Newham hospital to operate at full capacity and to ensure development at Newham.

Closure of the Guy's A&E unit is likely to prove tricky for ministers, as Labour claimed during the general election campaign that it would be "stopped on day one of a Labour government".

However, the pill will be sugared by the review's recommendation to scale down development of nearby St Thomas' hospital, with which Guy's is merging, so that Guy's is "likely to keep more services ... than was

planned by the previous government". Ministers are also claiming they are spending almost an extra £1 billion on health care in London — £800 million on new hospitals and clinics and at least £140 million on primary care and mental health services, £20 million of which will come on stream in 1998/99.

The five-strong review panel says the number of GPs in London is shown to have fallen since 1990, while the number outside the capital rose 6 per cent; one in five GP practices in London is single-handed, compared with one in 12 elsewhere.

Raiders 'beat recluse brothers'

Rory Carroll

THIEVES beat a reclusive pensioner to an unrecognisable pulp and murdered his brother at their remote cottage, a court heard yesterday. Three previous break-ins went unreported because the bachelors did not want to make a fuss.

Joe Smales, 85, died three weeks after he and his brother, Bert, 67, were kicked and beaten for their pension and egg business money, it was claimed.

Daniel Mansell, 28, and Paul Maxwell, 33, who are also brothers, allegedly targeted the bachelors after being tipped off by criminal friends who had twice robbed the house in Stanley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

Mansell and Maxwell, who changed his name, deny murder and two charges of robbery.

Ben Nolan QC, prosecuting, told Leeds crown court that Mansell and Maxwell first broke in in June 1996, stealing an unknown sum of money and attacking the Smales. The robbery was never reported.

The Smales lived frugally and spent little. "Their accumulated pension money and profit from the egg business was kept in cash in the house — a fact we allege became known to the defendants."

Mansell, from Rochdale, and Maxwell, from the Manchester area, allegedly returned to the house on October 13, 1996. "Bert Smales remembers very little more than answering the door and

then being attacked. His poor recollection is not surprising having regard to the severity of his injuries."

"When he was found he was covered in blood, he was barely conscious, his face was a mass of bruising." His nose and forehead were both fractured.

Neighbours found Bert Smales in a blood-splattered room and his older brother lying outside in the garden. "Joe's face was swollen and bleeding and really he was barely recognisable. He had suffered a fractured jaw, broken neck and bleeding in his head."

He died in hospital on November 7, 1996, from pneumonia and deep vein thrombosis. His death was a direct consequence of his injuries. It was not known how much money

was stolen but cash was kept all over the house.

Joe Smales had £800 in his clothes when he was taken to hospital. Some of the banknotes were out of date and no longer legal tender.

The raids on the Smales had been planned in jail when Maxwell became friends with another prisoner, Karl Chapman, who had robbed many old people with an accomplice, Gary Ford.

Chapman and Ford had robbed the Smales brothers in November, 1992, and again in December, 1993. Neither crime was reported.

Maxwell became very interested and told Chapman he was going to target some of the previous victims when he was released.

The hearing continues today.

Woodhead: key age group gets weakest teaching

John Carroll
Education Editor

THE Government may fail to meet its education targets because too many primary heads are allocating their weakest teachers to classes of eight-year-olds — the key age group whose test performance in three years' time will make or break the political reputation of ministers.

Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector of schools, warned yesterday of an alarming dip in the quality of teaching given to pupils after they had taken the national curriculum tests at seven.

Heads were directing their best staff to prepare children for the national tests at seven and 11. This tended to leave a quality gap in the middle years of primary school. "To hit the Government's targets we must think what can be done to raise standards for those pupils", he said.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, has asked the Government's political credibility on raising the performance of 11-year-olds in literacy and numeracy tests by 2002. He wants

the proportion reaching the expected standard to rise from 63 per cent to 80 per cent in English and from 62 per cent to 75 per cent in maths.

The last tests before the likely date of the next election will be taken in May 2001 by children who are currently aged seven or eight — too old to benefit from the Government's commitment to cut infant class sizes. Mr Woodhead said he wanted more schools to adopt voluntary tests at nine to keep this key generation of pupils up to the mark.

He said teachers may be taking an over-optimistic view of pupils' performance at seven. Although 80 per cent reached the expected Level 2 in reading, about a quarter of these pupils scraped by with a grade 2C.

"If, as many believe, grade 2C is pitched too low, then the test does not represent a proper stepping stone", he said.

Mr Woodhead was presenting his annual report for the academic year 1996/97, including the first three months under Labour ministers. It was less critical than his previous reports, raising suspicions among the teacher unions about his motivation.

He said teaching was unsatisfactory in 12 per cent of lessons, compared to his estimate of 30 per cent three years ago. Primary schools were adopting better methods, including more challenging whole-class teaching and setting pupils according to their ability.

"Four years ago the idea that any teacher might be incompetent was dismissed as a ludicrous rightwing plot. Nobody now tries to defend the indefensible", he said.

But there was still an unacceptable variation in the performance of schools with broadly similar intakes of pupils. "Put bluntly, education remains too much of a lottery. Some children have access to wonderful state education; others, through an accident of geography, do not. It is naive to pretend that the achievement of all schools can be raised to that of the best, but the gap at present is too wide."

An important reason was the variable performance of head teachers. "One in six primary and one in 10 secondary head teachers are not judged to be providing proper educational leadership." These 3,000 heads lacked vi-

sion, authority and a clear plan of action.

Shortages of books and equipment were damaging quality of teaching in a quarter of secondary schools and 10 per cent of primaries. Half had not spent their budgets wisely, the other half were underfunded.

Mr Woodhead also warned that local education authorities would not fulfil the new responsibilities they are being given to raise school standards without a "substantial improvement in their own performance".

Mr Woodhead stuck by his estimate that there were 13,000 "incompetent" teachers and "intractable problems" in about 10 per cent of schools visited. New solutions were needed, including the action zones proposed by ministers.

"I am not going soft on teachers. From the first day in this post, I have wanted to be clear about underachievement and failure where it exists."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said Mr Woodhead "conjures up figures for failing teachers and heads like rabbits out of a hat."

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Labour arts policy is 'dumbing down' nation, says Peter Hall

THE theatre director Sir Peter Hall yesterday accused the Government of "dumbing down" the nation through its decision to give arts subjects less emphasis in the national curriculum, writes Dan Gledhill.

Speaking at the launch of a series of Masterclasses '98, the theatre world's own education initiative, he said: "The Government has taken music, art and drama off the priority list in primary schools, which I think is awful. This will lead to the dumbing down of the nation. So we shan't need any art galleries, theatres or opera houses, which would be a great benefit from a cost savings point of view."

His attack comes 10 days after he criticised the Government's cultural policies before an audience that included the Culture Secretary Chris Smith. His audience yesterday was made up of 12 leading theatre figures who are giving their services free to offer talks and masterclasses to drama students and secondary school pupils hoping to enter the profession.

Maureen Lipman, Steven Berkoff, Joan Plowright, Tim Supple, and Phyllida Lloyd are all to take part in the scheme.

Afterwards, Sir Peter continued his attack. The Government's arts policies, he said, filled him with "utter dismay".

The standstill funding announcements for the arts sector at the end of last year, and the closure of some companies and cuts by others that have ensued, have eroded the traditional goodwill felt by many in the arts world for the Labour administration.

"There is a conspiracy among parents not to tell you how awful it is because they want everyone to suffer"

Two tales of home life

Nigerian scam costs UK billions

Christopher Elliott

THE letter arrives marked "strictly confidential". It contains an urgent business proposal from a high official purporting to be with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

"I have in my capacity the sum of US\$2.2 million (£145 million), which was actually generated from an over-invoiced contract sum in my Corporation. Right now, I write to solicit your assistance in the transfer of this fund into your account."

And the punter is, perhaps, hooked.

That letter is one of a million that police yesterday estimated were sent by criminals from West Africa, mostly Nigeria, last year. They are part

of an advance fee fraud (AFF) that starts by promising to divide the spoils but ends with the punters gulled into sending amounts up to £50,000 to finish the deal. They never see the cash again.

The growth of the fraud, often used to finance crimes such as international drug dealing and illegal immigration rackets, has prompted the formation of a special squad based at the National Criminal Intelligence Service's London headquarters.

Even charities have been sucked into the scam by means of a different style of letter promising that the organisation is the beneficiary of a will.

"Fraud committed by West African crime groups, benefits fraud as well as advanced fee fraud, is estimated to cost

the UK at least £3.5 billion a year. In 1997 over 68,000 AFF letters from these groups were handed to police, and we believe there are many more in circulation. People should not reply to them."

Police estimate that of about 100,000 recipients, about 1,000 respond and 10 send money.

A pilot scheme involving the squad, which began on October 31, has already led to 26 arrests and the recovery of 26 kilos of cocaine, 95 stolen credit cards, five forged passports, and five cheques with a face value of \$544 million (£333 million) in two months.

Desmond Davies, deputy editor of West Africa magazine, said yesterday: "They keep describing the people who go for these letters as 'victims'. But when they reply

they are willing to defraud the Nigerian government or a company to gain money."

The formation of the squad is backed by the Nigerian government, which has become increasingly concerned at the effect on the nation's image abroad as the problem has mushroomed over the past 10 years.

Gneyne Anosiki, deputy head of the Nigerian Information Service, who was at yesterday's launch in London, said: "There is growing concern about the impact on the image of the country. It affects thousands and thousands of hard-working Nigerians who are contributing honestly to the growth of the country."

"In the past, this was seen simply as a Nigerian problem."

Why does Saddam Hussein think he can take on the US? David Hirst unravels the message in his speeches

Ranting lord of the joyful martyrs

AS THE fear grows that the confrontation over Iraq's weapons of mass destruction could become another Desert Storm, or worse, one question is dominant. What on earth makes Saddam Hussein pit his puny strength against the military might of the United States and its allies, let alone imagine he can win such an unequal battle?

Few would look for an answer in his speeches: tedious, rambling, ranting, and sometimes almost unintelligible. He makes a lot of them at this time of the year. As well as universal festivals such as Christmas, they commemorate the, for him, no less sacred events of the Ba'athist calendar. Yet they do furnish insights into his strategy and psychology.

In the last of them, at the end of Ramadan, he said: "During battles in ancient times... the lance was longer than the sword. The one who had the lance could hit the one who had the sword before the latter reached him. But if the swordsman dexterously fended off the lance's blow, then the lance, unable to regain its balance, found that the sword reached his neck."

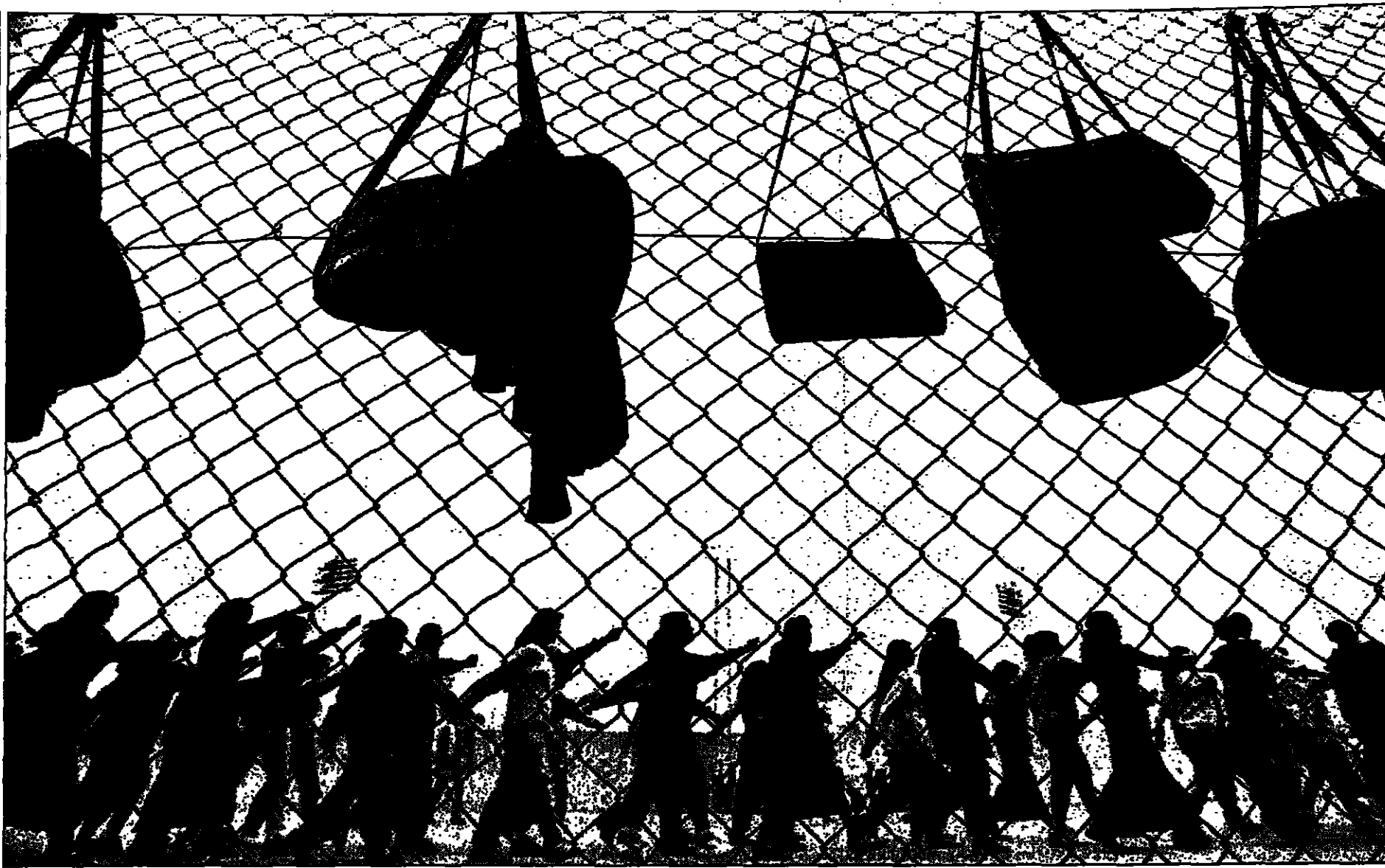
His speeches are peppered with variants on this theme, so central to his thinking that it should be given a name: Saddam's Doctrine of Incommensurate Strength.

The historical insight has a very contemporary relevance, which he does not cease to labour. "The situation with the Americans," he said, "is now similar to this. We have not gone to America; we did not cross the Atlantic to it. Therefore any losses we inflict on them will be a heavy price for them..."

"However, any sacrifices we make is a price we must pay, because the thing we are defending is greater than all our sacrifices. This is the equation. If attacked, we are forced to fight with all our capabilities..."

To him, three things compensate for Iraq's physical weakness: leadership, the will to martyrdom and a readiness to go the whole way in any struggle.

By leadership of course he means his own, and this is equal in his eyes to that of the great prophets of monotheism. To all but himself and his immediate followers, such



Their handbags hanging on a fence, Baghdad schoolgirls train to defend their country against American attack

PHOTOGRAPH: ENRIC MARTI

megalomaniac self-esteem is a measure of his absolute despotism, which has indeed been astonishingly proof against all the crises and calamities he has inflicted on his regime and country.

On January 17, in a speech on the seventh anniversary of the Mother of Battles, he likened himself to Abraham. When Abraham "decided, on God's orders, to move with his clan from Iraq, where he was born, he carried only a stick to ward off wolves and stray dogs."

"[But] he was neither timid, nor afraid of the disparity in

material resources. Without the leader's vision, no people or army in history achieved a collective heroic goal or immortal record."

Hence Iraq's "victory" in the Mother of Battles was actually his.

It is the leader who mobilises that second compensatory asset: the people's readiness for supreme sacrifice.

"Our righteous martyrs are high in heaven, with their God," he said, "and those who are living will always be potential martyrs."

In his scheme of things there is not much difference

between the living and the dead. His ability to get people to pass, ostensibly joyfully, from one condition to the other is another prime yardstick of his despotism.

It is why the Iraqi people are forever joining new defence militias or turning themselves into human shields in the leader's 70-odd palaces; why the Pulse of Youth, a newspaper owned by his son Uday, said on Sunday: "Let the Americans kill tens of thousands of children and old men; we must die standing up rather than live on our knees."

Thirdly, it is the leader who

takes the decision — at which the people, left to themselves, might balk — to go all the way, or, as he said on January 17, "irrevocably to wage the greater jihad for the lifting of sanctions."

Going all the way now almost certainly means a readiness to use the weapons of mass destruction which a large-scale US assault would be designed to destroy.

True, he only hinted at that with his talk of using "all our capabilities" and his warning that "the enemies will find something that does not please them".

But coming from such a man, it is hint enough. And what makes going all the way so important is the probability that the US is not ready to do likewise: send in ground troops, or, as President Clinton said, "refight the Gulf war".

The fact that Baghdad's "capabilities" are not "commensurate" with Washington's is offset by the fact that Washington's readiness to sustain losses is nowhere near commensurate with Baghdad's.

Saddam evidently believes that the Doctrine of Incommensurate Strength is steadily bearing fruit.

"God Almighty is digging pits along the Americans' path," he said.

"These dark and covered pits may get deeper with the passage of time. Day by day they will retreat. They should not deceive themselves, once again, that what they failed to achieve through malice, deception and charlatanism, can be achieved through military aggression."

"This is not a threat... because we know their power to inflict harm, just as we assume they are aware of the capability of great Iraq and how God cares for it."

Food crisis worsening, UN warns

Dominic Evans in Baghdad

THE chief humanitarian officer for the United Nations in Iraq said yesterday that even if Baghdad agreed a huge increase in the amount of oil it is allowed to sell to buy food, ending malnutrition in the country would take time.

Dennis Halliday, the humanitarian co-ordinator, said the seven-year embargo had created malnutrition which was getting worse one year after the start of "oil-for-food" sales intended to meet urgent food and medical needs.

"This country is one of the few where child morbidity and child mortality is increasing," he said, adding "I don't want to give the impression that we are going to solve this problem by the end of March or the end of May."

Mr Halliday said fears of military strikes on Iraq were beginning to affect UN monitoring of food distribution — a requirement of the oil-for-food accord. "It would be extremely disappointing if we were to get this increase in revenues and then find ourselves unable to implement it."

Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, has proposed that the level of oil Iraq can sell under the accord should be increased to \$5.2 billion (\$3.25 billion) every six months from \$2 billion now.

But Iraq, which wants the sanctions imposed after the Gulf war of 1990-91 to be lifted, yesterday said the proposals were a plot to milk half its oil resources.

Under the accord, about one third of revenues from oil sales go towards reparations and UN costs. Mr Annan's plans raise the value of Iraq's humanitarian purchases to \$3.8 billion from \$1.4 billion, but urge a similar rise in reparations and costs.

Mr Halliday said he believed that the deal could be agreed. — Reuters

News in brief

China pricks balloon hopes

A EUROPEAN team of balloonists said their efforts to fly around the world non-stop were at an end after China yesterday refused to grant them permission to cross its airspace.

The Breitling Orbiter 2 control centre said the chances of completing the journey were now "zero".

The team of three balloonists, which includes Briton

Andy Elson, still hopes to beat the world record for the longest time spent in the air, set last year by the American Steve Fossett.

Beijing turned down appeals from European diplomats to let the Orbiter cross Chinese airspace as the balloon hovered over the Indian delta in Pakistan. It took off last Wednesday from the Swiss Alps. — AP.

UK supports laser ban

BRITAIN has pledged full support for a United Nations ban on laser weapons that cause permanent blindness — only the second time, the Red Cross says, that a weapon will have been prohibited before reaching the battlefield, writes David Fairhall.

The protocol takes effect in six months' time following ratification by Hungary, the 20th country to do so.

The Foreign Office said yesterday that it hoped to complete its own ratification shortly.

Military lasers are now commonplace for range-finding and precision bombing and there has been widespread international concern that they will be developed eventually as anti-personnel weapons.

UK territories offered hope

Britain is looking "sympathetically and urgently" at the question of citizenship for residents of 11 dependent territories — including St Helena, the most remote — but no decision will be taken until a White Paper has been completed in several months, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is to announce today, writes Ian Black.

President resigns

Armenia's president, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, said yesterday that he had resigned under pressure from political opponents. No other details were given. — Reuters.

Rwandan killings

Some 24 Rwandan genocide suspects recently freed from prison because they were minors, elderly or in poor health

Tsars' buying sprees on show

CATHERINE the Great Cloved to shop in Britain as much as the modern Russians thronging Oxford Street, but her agents favour the workshops of painters and craftsmen, writes James Meek in Moscow.

The fruits of the 18th-century Russian empress's acquisitive nature went on display at the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg yesterday: 200 art treasures from Britain, including works by Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Some pieces have not been seen in public since the 1917 revolution.

The exhibition of three centuries of collecting by Russian royalty was to have visited Britain but talks on a venue failed.

were killed last month in "mob justice" attacks, state-run Radio Rwanda reported yesterday. Most were killed in the southern province of Butare. — Reuters.

Prison cell death

A Palestinian man died in police custody in the West Bank city of Hebron yesterday, officials and human rights groups said. A police spokesman said Nasser al-Horoub, aged 26, was found hanging from a shoelace in his cell but the Palestinian Prisoner Society claimed he was tortured to death. — Reuters.

Crash sightings

Philippine air force pilots yesterday reported sighting the remains of a DC-9 plane that crashed with 104 people on board on Monday, an air traffic official said. The pilots saw no survivors at the site, 40 miles north-east of Cagayan de Oro airport. — Reuters.

Kenya's MPs assemble to sound and fury

Lucy Hannan in Nairobi

DISMAY at recent political killings overshadowed the opening session of the Kenyan parliament yesterday. Both sides of the house stamped, shouted and jeered, and opposition MPs waved placards protesting at "genocide" and "a legacy of killing".

More than 100 people have been killed in Rift Valley province since January in attacks directed at communities which voted for the opposition.

But opposition MPs failed to present a united front in their effort to disrupt the session. Some stood, some sat, some bowed, and some demonstrated. As they drummed their heels, they drowned out an appeal to the government by the new official leader of the opposition, Mwi Kibaki, to stop the killing.

President Daniel arap Moi responded with a few disparaging gestures. Just before parliament opened, his government issued a statement blaming the clashes primarily on Mr Kibaki's Democratic Party.

Mr Kibaki inherits an opposition that has proved almost unmanageable. A single opposition candidate would have beaten President Moi in the December general election, and Mr Kibaki tersely concedes that a historic opportunity has been missed.

"As much as they wanted to fight Moi, the opposition were too busy quarrelling about their own leadership," he said.

He claims that a hung par-

liament and a determined opposition will make the next five years "different". But those listening to yesterday's proceedings did not seem to agree. "It's worse than ever," one opposition voter said.

Mr Kibaki says Kenya faces a leadership vacuum because of Mr Moi's refusal to stop political violence and sort out the "gangsters" fighting for succession in his party, Kantu.

So far Mr Moi has refused to appoint an heir: a vice-president. Mr Kibaki says that is because the post was promised during the elections to four different regions, "and if Moi chooses one now, he will create a crisis within his own party".

Having served 10 years as vice-president, Mr Kibaki is familiar with Mr Moi's wily but whimsical style. "He relies completely on his advisers, and nothing important goes through the normal machinery of government."

He says the government wants to "destroy" the Kikuyu, his own ethnic group, which overwhelmingly voted against President Moi.

Other opposition leaders disagree with him, pointing out that similar political clashes have affected other areas and communities, like Transmara in western Kenya, and Likoni in the Mombasa area.

In Rift Valley, gangs have murdered, looted and burnt with little restraint by the security forces.

In urban areas, including Nairobi, leaflets are circulating threatening to evict and kill. Counter leaflets call on the targeted communities to arm and defend themselves.

"Nowadays we have problems with the sublime. Where is it? Can you get charter flights there?"
Adrian Searle on Francis Bacon

G2 Arts, page 8

Women to fight Afghan repression

Stephen Bates in Brussels

A CAMPAIGN to free Afghan women from repression under the Taliban regime was launched by the European Commission and women's groups in Brussels yesterday.

International Women's Day on March 8 will be used to put pressure on the Islamic fundamentalists.

A veiled Afghan woman doctor, at a media conference launching the campaign, described repression in the capital Kabul since the Taliban took power in 1996. "Before we could go to school and university; now we cannot step into the streets without a man, who must be our husband or brother," she said.

Women are not allowed to move freely outside their homes unless completely veiled, to take jobs, receive education, or appear or speak in public.

Campaign organisers will press western governments to refuse to recognise the regime and to persuade international conglomerates, such as oil companies, not to do business in the country until human rights are respected. Several companies, such as Amoco, are known to be lobbying to build pipelines and extract oil reserves.

Some women's groups also want to put pressure on Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Women in western governments who are backing the campaign include Clare Short, Britain's interna-

tional development officer, European commissioners and parliamentarians. Nobel Prize winners and leading Islamic women, such as Hanan Ashrawi,



A veiled woman doctor helps start the Brussels campaign

the Palestinian minister for higher education.

The woman doctor said: "There was a woman who was burned in a fire, and when she was taken to hospital there was only a male doctor on duty who was not allowed to treat her, so she died."

She added: "This has no relation to Islam. It is a misuse of power. The Taliban are worse than the people who were there before. It is not in our culture, tradition or religion."

Women workers had even been driven from an orphanage in Kabul, leaving no one to care for 500 children, she said.

Observers say the restrictions are an attempt to show the government's difference from the former Russian occupying regime.

Lewinsky's White House trips give Starr extra ammunition

Martin Kettle in Washington

MONICA LEWINSKY's threat to President Clinton was underlined yesterday when officials confirmed that the former intern visited the White House "about three dozen times" between spring 1996, when she left to work at the Pentagon, and December last year.

Mr Clinton has denied a sexual relationship with Ms Lewinsky and said he never urged her to lie about it. However, the White House logs raise the question of why a minor former aide should have had such frequent access to the building. Pentagon officials say the visits were nothing to do with Ms Lewinsky's job in the defence department's press office.

The president is widely alleged to have told Paula Jones's lawyers under oath on January 17 that he had never met Ms Lewinsky alone after she left the White House employment in April 1996. Ms Lewinsky is said to have made a similar denial in her affidavit to the Jones team.

Confirmation of Ms Lewinsky's White House visits will give Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel and



Monica Lewinsky, leaving Washington yesterday for a few days away in Los Angeles

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVEN SEMME

Mr Clinton's chief accuser, a chance to question administration staff about them. Under US federal law, it is a criminal felony to lie on oath in a civil law suit.

Mr Starr now has a full copy of Mr Clinton's crucial six-hour deposition to Mrs Jones's lawyers, which was

laid before a Washington grand jury on Monday in response to a subpoena. Yesterday, as Mr Starr took evidence in front of the grand jury from the former White House adviser George Stephanopoulos, Ms Lewinsky was expected to leave Washington for the first time since

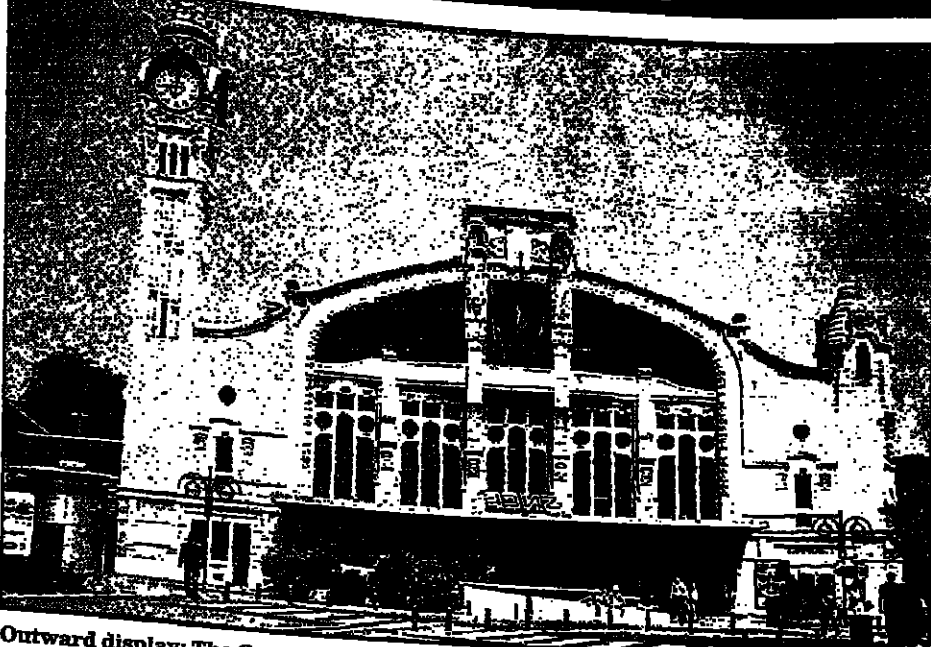
the crisis broke. Accompanied by her lawyer, William Ginsburg, Ms Lewinsky was scheduled to fly to Los Angeles "for a few days" to stay with her father.

A University of California student newspaper, the Daily Bruin, yesterday quoted Dennis Lytton, a student who worked with Ms Lewinsky at the Pentagon, in 1997, as saying that she told him she had a sexual relationship with the president. Mr Lytton repeated his story yesterday.

Officials familiar with the White House logs stressed that they did not specify Ms Lewinsky's ultimate destination during her three dozen visits. On most occasions Ms Lewinsky was cleared for entry by Mr Clinton's personal secretary Betty Currie, who gave evidence to the grand jury last week.

Her last trip was allegedly on December 28, 11 days after she was subpoenaed to testify to Ms Jones's lawyers and 10 days before she signed an affidavit denying a sexual relationship with Mr Clinton. Lawyers for President Clinton asked a judge yesterday to bring forward the trial concerning Paula Jones's lawsuit to March 23, to avoid further damaging leaks.

France's modern monuments



Outward display: The Gare de Rouen, built in 1928

PHOTOGRAPH BY M. MOSCO

A century of secular architecture to greet the new millennium

Paul Webster in Paris

A HUNDRED years from now, the discerning tourist may skip the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe and rush across to Paris's unfashionable 18th arrondissement to visit the multi-storey Salvation Army hostel in the rue Cantagrel.

The building, paid for by a princess and designed by Le Corbusier, is one of 1,000 functional, eccentric or historic 20th-century buildings classified since France introduced compulsory preservation orders in 1931. Many are already world famous, like Paris's art nouveau Metro

stations, while others are as obscure as an all-metal bungalow at Saint-Amour in the Jura.

To coincide with the 1,000th order, on a seaside villa at Clouaire in the south-west, the culture ministry has published a catalogue that amounts to a history of 20th-century private and public French architectural fashions.

An exhibition opening today in the 1937 Palais d'Iéna, classified in 1938, gives an insight into what conservationists believe will fascinate our descendants, from ornate exteriors like Rouen railway station, built in 1928, to spectacular interiors like the 1934 Camille Sée Lycée in Paris, a model for many pre-war high schools.

Some, like the Salvation Army's 1933 Cité-Refuge, with its space for 500 homeless, hardly seem extraordinary at first sight, but this was the Swiss-born Le Corbusier's first experiment in social housing and it inspired hundreds of copies throughout Europe.

Although the style appears almost mundane, the building is more striking than the nearby 23-storey 1960 Tour Albert, designated because it was Paris's first high-rise block.

The others, including factories, railway stations, shops, cafes, lighthouses, schools and mansions, illustrate the highs and lows of a national conservation policy that is now complemented by thousands of local preservation orders.

According to Bernard Toulou, who organised the exhibition, the 1931 protection law was originally used to preserve first world war sites, and it was not until 1957 that a 20th-century building was classified purely for its architectural value.

Le Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, designed by Auguste and Gustave Perret, was decorated by contemporary artists, including the painters Maurice Denis and Edouard Vuillard and the sculptor Emile-Antoine Bourdelle. Opened in 1913, it was the scene of riots at the first performance of Stravinsky's ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

When the writer André Malraux became Gaullist culture minister in 1958, 100 buildings were proposed, of which only five were approved, including a Paris synagogue designed by the Met-

ro's art nouveau architect Hector Guimard, who has 77 works among the chosen 1,000, followed by Le Corbusier with 33.

Malraux gradually classified about half his list, but public awareness did not develop until the demolition of Paris's market at Les Halles in 1971. Another Gaullist cultural minister, Michel Guy, relaunched a programme under which between 10 and

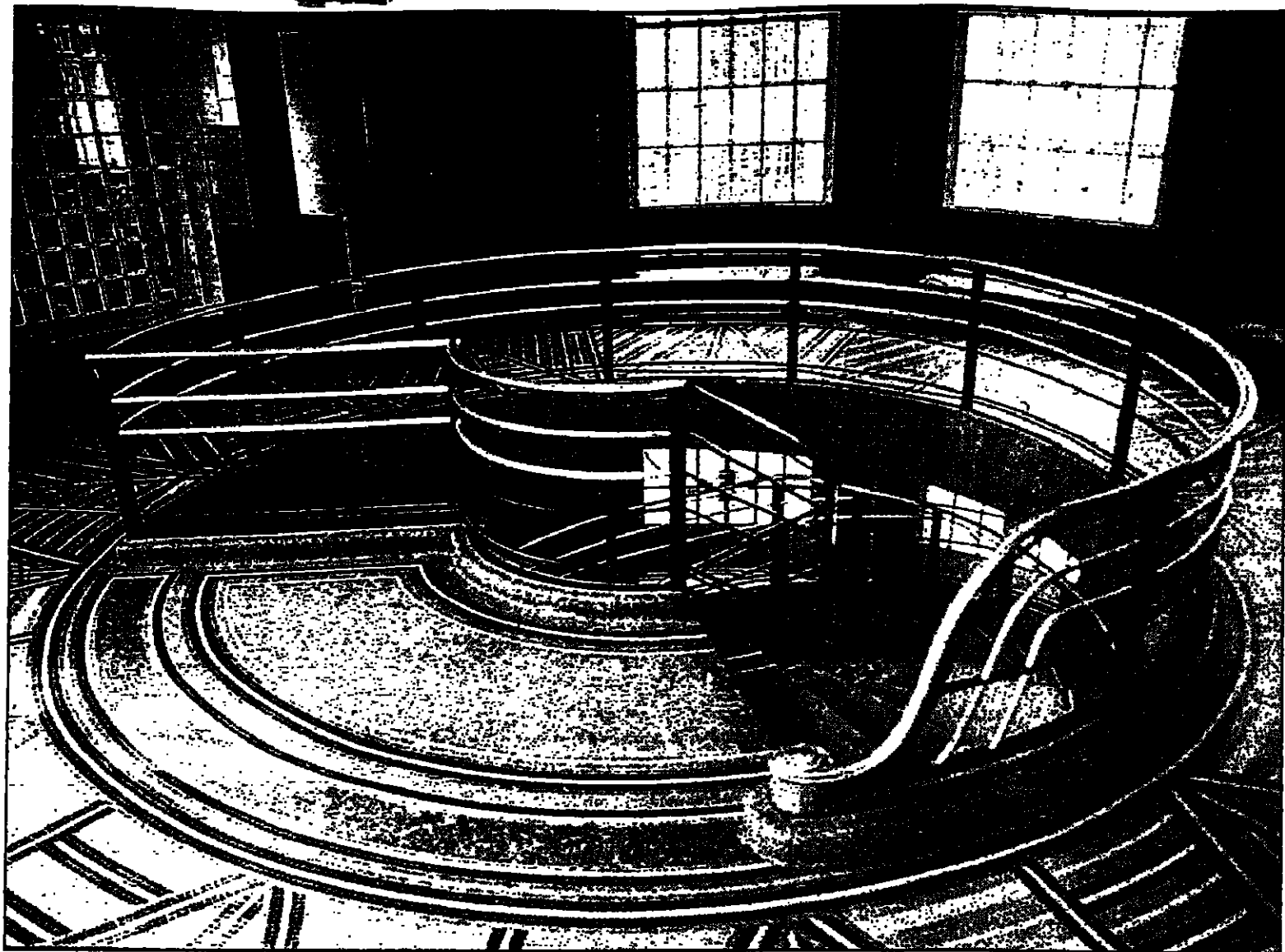
20 buildings a year were classified.

With the arrival in 1981 of the Socialist culture minister Jack Lang, preservation orders were widened to cover cinemas, factories, swimming baths, railway stations, schools and disused coal mines.

The most recent listing is Jean Dubuffet's colourful Tour aux figures in the Paris suburbs, which was opened in 1988.

A third of the list are houses, blocks of flats and mansions. The next biggest category is civil engineering works, followed by commercial projects, including sports and leisure centres.

"In contrast to earlier periods," Mr Toulou said, underlining the most significant shift in contemporary thinking about what rates as an historical monument, "religious buildings are poorly represented."



Inner grace: The interior of the Camille Sée Lycée in Paris, model for many pre-war high schools

PHOTOGRAPH BY D. LEBBE

Phone leaks reveal menace of Italy's separatist League

John Hooper in Rome

THE alternately zany and menacing activities of the separatist Northern League party were last night under scrutiny after a prosecutor claimed to have tapes showing its leader, Umberto Bossi, had discussed violence and the use of arms with associates.

Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi, on a visit to Estonia, was quick to condemn Mr Bossi's words heard in two intercepted telephone conversations. Mr Prodi said: "You don't achieve anything with language like this. All you do is devastate a country."

Mr Bossi was due to appear on television last night to be questioned about his remarks. His subordinates, while not denying the truth of the claim, question whether police had the legal right to listen in — as a member of parliament, Mr Bossi is meant to enjoy immunity from telephone interception.

Last week, Guido Papalia, a

Verona prosecutor, asked a judge to indict Mr Bossi and others on charges of subversion, following an investigation into the green-shirted Padanian National Guard, founded by the League in 1996.

In the leaked transcripts, Mr Bossi tells his party's Venetian regional secretary: "It's good, we'll all have... a machine-gun in hand."

In an apparent reference to non-northerners, he adds: "It'll be an enormous satisfaction to take with me into the next world as much as possible of this living shit."

It had been assumed that the League leader was a restraining influence on the Green Shirts, who have been linked with a string of ugly incidents. But in another conversation, it is Mr Bossi who appears the extremist. While cautioning that the Green Shirts should act only if provoked, he adds: "You need to beat up [people] as much as possible." His subordinate warns: "You can't set 300 Green Shirts into battle against 600 policemen."

MEPs aim to curb central bank

Martin Walker reports from Brussels on the opening shot in a long-term campaign to acquire real parliamentary authority

THE European Parliament is demanding the power to veto, and if necessary, to dismiss, the president of the new European Central Bank (ECB), opening an uphill battle to impose democratic accountability on the managers of the single currency.

Calling for amendments to the European treaties to give parliament at least the modest political authority which the US Congress exerts over the Federal Reserve Board, the parliament's monetary committee argued yesterday that the bank's mission to combat inflation would need the support of MEPs.

The ECB's independence "will only meet with public acceptance if [it] enjoys a high degree of legitimacy; the only way to ensure this is full accountability of the ECB for its actions," the draft resolution says.

"The independence of the

ECB will go further than that of any other central bank," it goes on.

"As the future ECB will conduct a single monetary policy for all the member states taking part in European monetary union, democratic accountability must similarly be exercised at the European level — the European Parliament is the most appropriate body to hold the ECB to account."

With a long list of recommendations, from quarterly appearances by the bank board before parliament to publication in summary of the board's minutes, the German Social Democrat chair of the committee, Christa Randzio-Plath, sought a sweeping extension of parliamentary authority.

She is unlikely to get it. While bankers and finance ministers constantly promise full consultation, there are

two principles on which they are likely to stand firm.

The first is that the bank's job is monetary stability and the avoidance of inflation, rather than growth or job creation. The second is that government, and not the European Parliament, pick the bank's president and board. Both are enshrined in the Maastricht treaty.

"Actually, we don't have any powers at all," Ms Randzio-Plath admitted at her press conference yesterday.

It is, however, the opening shot in a campaign which

some MEPs see as equivalent to Westminster's centuries-long struggle with the crown for control of the public purse. The difference is that MEPs are fighting not only the bank but national governments and finance ministries as well.

That is why the committee's deputy chairman, the British Labour MEP Alan Donnelly, has formed a group called the Euro Forum, bringing together MEPs and members of the finance committees of national parliaments to exert a double influence on the appointed bank directors.

Parliament can expect to win some ground through attrition. The Dutchman Wim Duisenberg, the leading candidate to head the bank, signalled some early concessions this week with a promise that the ECB would be "as transparent as possible".

In particular, he said it would publish "a quantified definition of what it means by price stability, along with its specific objectives and an explanation of any divergence from these objectives".

German soccer knocked out by nuclear-waste policing

Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE yearly ritual battle between riot police and protesters over nuclear waste shipments is about to paralyse Germany's soccer season.

At least 10 matches are being called off because of a lack of police patrols at the stadiums.

The German football federation, which wants a smooth run to the World Cup in France this summer, is sour at losing its case for minimal disruption of the federal league.

The police authorities said yesterday that 10 first division matches in a five-week period in March and April would need to be postponed to enable them to secure the routes of two nuclear trains.

One batch of nuclear waste is being moved from southern to northern Germany, the other is being transported from a reprocessing facility in France to

the Gorleben storage site in northern Germany.

The transfer of nuclear waste to Gorleben last spring brought the biggest German security deployments in peacetime.

About 30,000 police were mobilised at huge cost to enforce the army of anti-clear saboteurs and smaller groups of street fighters.

The interior ministry in the northern state of Lower Saxony, which includes Gorleben, costed the operation at more than 111 million marks (£40 million).

German nuclear operators said last week that they were planning two shipments of nuclear waste across the country this spring, although they did not give the dates.

The police said soccer matches due to be played in nine German cities were being postponed between March 20 and April 26, although it was not disclosed exactly when the nuclear transports would be under way.



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Cleansing the lottery

It now needs a robust boss and a complete rethink

IT WAS right for Peter Davis, director-general of Oflot, to resign last night. He couldn't have stayed in his post with dignity after all the criticism heaped on his office recently. He was losing the confidence of all around him. But the problems of the National Lottery go much deeper than the personal qualities of its watchdog, however ill-advised he was to accept air flights from Guy Snowden, chairman of G-Tech, the US lottery supplier who was this week found to have offered a bribe to Richard Branson. Mr Davis can't be entirely blamed for the embarrassingly high profits Camelot, the lottery operator, has made (a cumulative £169 million on an investment of £49.5 million, according to the separate Lottery Promotion Company) since his terms of reference, amazingly, required him to regulate the monopoly while simultaneously maximising its income. Imagine the outcry if that were the job of the water regulator. If the lottery's income is maximised, then its profits will inevitably rise under the present rules. The problem is partly his terms of reference and partly the parameters set for Camelot.

Richard Branson's not-for-profit lottery is a very attractive alternative (as long as it is run more efficiently than his trains) but it is not necessarily a panacea. If the organisation chosen to run a not-for-profit scheme took big management fees, it could end up as profit in all but name — without necessarily generating as much gross income as Camelot has done. Most people accept that Camelot set up the lottery in an impressive manner and has generated huge sales (though there are 10 countries in Europe with higher per capita lottery sales, according to international comparisons).

What needs to be done? Firstly, G-Tech's behaviour ought to disqualify it from participating in the active running of the lottery in future. Mr Snow-

den's vacancy as a director of Camelot should not be filled, and the company should be asked to dispose of its shares and merely continue as an arm's-length supplier until a decision has been made on the future structure of the lottery. Secondly, Mr Davis's successor should be given teeth so he or she can clamp down on excess profits in the way that other regulators can and also do something about the £3.4 billion of lottery income which, amazingly, hasn't yet been disbursed. Thirdly, and most important, the distribution of the lottery funds must go back to first principles.

The Government is now using lottery income to fund activities which, although absolutely vital (like training teachers for information technology and homework clubs) should clearly be financed from mainstream taxation, and no amount of ministerial casuistry will change that. The lottery was set up to finance activities that couldn't be afforded by a parsimonious Treasury and that is how it should continue. There has also been a misallocation of funds in that a disproportionate amount has gone to fund the leisure activities of the well-heeled rather than to enrich the lives of poorer people, who are the biggest buyers of lottery tickets. Perhaps the Lottery Promotion Company (which thought up the idea in the first place) is right to argue that much more funds should be devoted to improving sporting and coaching facilities for the young. This would enrich their leisure hours, raise sporting prowess and, hopefully, help to reduce crime.

For all its faults, the lottery has been a huge success and — unlike so many governments — will leave its mark on the country's infrastructure for decades. What it needs is to rediscover its founding ideals before it becomes a permanent tax gatherer for the Treasury. The departure of Mr Davis is a good time for a complete rethink.

The drab descants of deficits

One solution for the Hallé is to go back to its roots

COMPARED to Covent Garden's £10 million debt, £600,000 may seem small. But regional institutions learned long ago not to expect the cosseting which the Royal Opera has enjoyed. Britain's oldest full-time orchestra is in serious trouble. The Hallé board meets in Manchester today to decide what to do about its deficit. Talk of liquidation, bankruptcy and closure has been in the air with a special report from the orchestra's accountants declaring that bank overdraft limits have been reached. In a quote of the year, the accountants lamented that a "well run" orchestra should lose only £200,000. The Hallé may be losing £500,000. But that is the state of the performing arts right across Britain as Arts Council subsidies have been frozen or cut year after year.

The Hallé is not blameless. The report is believed to criticise the orchestra's lack of adequate financial controls and poor management. Personality clashes have played a part with the orchestra losing two managing directors and a chief executive. But there are more fundamental problems which are hurting all orchestras. Britain is unable to match either the state subsidies of continental Europe or the corporate and individual donors of the US. Like London, the North-west has an oversupply of orchestras: two full symphony orchestras (the Hallé and BBC Philharmonic), a chamber group plus the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic down the road. Ironically, the Hallé has been successful in the first challenge facing an

orchestra: attracting audiences. Since moving into its new home in the £42 million Bridgewater Hall, it has been filling an average of eight out of 10 seats at its concerts. About 75 per cent are new concertgoers who never went to the old performances in the Free Trade Hall. The orchestra has built strong ties with local schools, running primary school concerts, youth programmes and outreach workshops, which have even included composition projects. And like the successful Bournemouth orchestra, it is forming smaller ensembles to carry its music to smaller neighbouring halls.

What else can be done? The immediate need is a public appeal. Manchester is a proud warm-hearted city. Local people are bound to respond. The orchestra was flooded with calls yesterday following news reports of its financial problems. Understandably so. The orchestra's spokesman was right: the Hallé is one of the city's most prized possessions with a reputation which stretches round the world. It has made an enormous contribution to the economic development of Greater Manchester, reflected in the subsidies which the surrounding local authorities have been ready to contribute. For the longer term, the orchestra should look again at their founder's first principle: individual subscriptions. Individual donations now provide up to 25 per cent of orchestral income in some American cities. What Charles Hallé introduced in 1858, could still be the financial saviour 140 years on.

Lethal lapse in ethical standards

There is no such thing anywhere as a civilised execution

KARLA FAYE Tucker will by now — unless there is a last minute reprieve — have walked to her place of execution. The procedure is for the condemned prisoner to be placed in a supine position on a construction known as "a gurney" and strapped down. A nurse inserts an intravenous needle with a plastic catheter. At a signal, a cocktail of chemicals is administered to induce unconsciousness, to halt breathing, and to stop the heart.

This is the reality of capital punishment by this particular means. The details are a reminder that all execution is degrading and inhumane. Whether it is less horrible than other methods is not relevant. Nor is the gender of the person being executed, although it is this which has focused attention upon the case of Karla Tucker. The case put to the Supreme Court by her lawyers did not rely on her being a woman. It complained that

she had been denied the chance to plead for her life in person. Most tellingly, all 76 clemency requests in Texas since 1993 have been rejected. How could an appeal under such circumstances be regarded as fair?

Yet the issue of lethal injection still has to be watched carefully: a report last week from Amnesty International warns that its use may become more widespread and — because of the false belief that it is more humane — could actually act as a barrier to reform of the death penalty. In 1997, China became the first country outside the US to use the method; officials there have praised it as "fairer, more civilised and more cost effective." The first such executions may be imminent in Guatemala and the Philippines. Lethal injection also requires doctors and nurses to infringe their ethical obligations. The search for an "ideal" way to kill someone is not the sign of a humane society.



Letters to the Editor

Bill Morris: why I was right

IDO not wish to strain your readers' patience by responding to personal abuse from the glitzyati of the Socialist Workers' Party over the Liverpool docks strikes (Letters, February 3, January 31). There are, however, three points which everyone should understand.

Firstly, calls for solidarity action, defiance of the law and so on, would have been no more than rhetoric. There was no support for solidarity action whatsoever within the T&G — indeed, over 80 T&G members employed by Masey Docks, workmates of those dismissed, continued working normally throughout the dispute, which was called without their involvement. I have as much responsibility to them as to the dismissed 320.

Secondly, the legal threats faced by the union were not abstract ones. A judgment was made in a New Jersey court which would have fined the union \$1 million a day if we lent public support to the dismissed dockers. Fines of that magnitude, which could have been repeated in Britain itself, would have left the T&G incapable of functioning — a high price to pay for rhetoric.

If it was a matter of individual sacrifice, I would have been happy to make it. But I was not prepared to sacrifice the interests of every T&G member and their families and see our organisation smashed up to no avail.

Thirdly, it is ironic that those who normally shout loudest about rank-and-file democracy in trade unions should overlook the point that the course of action urged by your correspondents was explicitly rejected by the T&G's conference. This conference, which is exclusively composed of lorry drivers, car workers, building workers, catering workers, etc., has a better sense of the realities of both the legal dangers and the dockers' dispute itself. Not surprising since it is they, not the comfortable middle-class, who would carry the can for any misjudgment.

Bill Morris, General Secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union, Transport House, London SW1E 5JD.

MARK Steel's condemnation of Bill Morris and the T&G (Yellow pages, February 3) conveniently ignores some key facts.

No union today is going to ignore the boundaries of the law. That is because they know that if they do not, they will suffer heavy fines and worse: other unions, such as the NGA, SOGAT and the NUM, had their assets sequestered. This did serious damage to the fabric of the unions.

No group of workers can expect to take action in breach of the law and then expect their union to ride to their rescue. To act unlawfully immediately gives an employer, set on union-busting, a golden opportunity, and, as at Liverpool, such employers are quick to take advantage. After that, a union inevitably negotiates from weakness. It is to the credit of the T&G, as well as the tenacity of the dockers themselves, that the negotiated settlement was as good as it was.

The future of unions depends neither on law-breaking nor on selling insurance. Our job is to work in partnership with good employers to expand opportunities and improve rewards for their employees, and to take on the bad employers, showing that unions can make a real difference to the way that people are treated at work.

John Monks, General Secretary, Trades Union Congress, Congress House, London WC1B 3LS.

The jackpot rolls over

JUDGING by his remarks on Monday evening (Bribes verdict, February 3), Richard Branson seems to see his libel court case as a public inquiry into how the lottery should be run. It was nothing of the kind.

It was not deciding important national questions about whether profit should go to shareholders or to good causes. It was trying to decide who was to be most believed about a lunchtime incident that happened four years ago.

The lottery project involved a massive injection of capital — there is far more technology involved than most people appreciate. Furthermore, it was not guaranteed to be the success we now see in hindsight. The Camelot shareholders took a risk on their capital, and would have paid the price if the event had been a flop. The so-called "no profit" alternatives are really arrangements whereby the management company would be paid a fixed fee — even if

the venture is a failure. Perhaps Richard Branson, having shown himself completely ineffectual with London and Continental Railways, is hoping he can persuade the Government to let him switch to that model for the Channel Tunnel link, the West Coast mainline, and any other contract he has where the figures do not look so good.

Anyway, whatever happened to that balloon? Dr John Forrest, 14 St Georges Road, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4JT.

RICHARD Branson's bid to operate the lottery was non-profit making and therefore able to offer more money to the good causes than Camelot did. However, Peter Davis, when making the decision to award the franchise, did not take this into consideration — because he interpreted that the intention of parliament was not to take this additional money into account. This was plainly preposterous.

As a public sector decision-

maker, it was the duty of the lottery regulator to take all the relevant circumstances into account when he made his decision. However, Peter Davis announced the reasons for his decision some three months after the franchise had been awarded and therefore out of time for a judicial review.

Mr Snowden had the good grace to resign quickly. Mr Davis should have gone long ago. Julian Izzo, Stoke Newington Road, London N16.

RICHARD Branson did not take Snowden's bribe. Will we ever know if there were others who did? Lindsay Badenoch, 68 Fawnbrake Avenue, London SE24 0BZ.

SURELY what Peter Davis actually said was that no one was questioning his voracity? Kevin Safford, 19 Blue Hatch, Frodsham, Warrington, Cheshire WA6 7QJ.

Mandela, milk, men and mates

IT III becomes Brian Walden to criticise Nelson Mandela or anyone else who fights for principles to the bitter end (Walden dismisses 'feckless' Mandela, February 3). As a fellow pupil at West Bromwich grammar school who, at that time, would have followed Walden anywhere in the pursuit of socialism, equality and justice, I have always felt betrayed by the way in which Brian failed to live up to his early promise. He pursued a career as an "expert" criticising politicians for being "ineffectual, arrogant, feckless and autocratic" instead of fighting for change himself.

Sylvia Parsons, 109 Heron Drive, Nottingham.

DRINK unpasteurised milk (Report, February 3). I also drink beer. In the former, I am a minority, in the latter, probably a majority. The Government plans to ban unpasteurised milk for health reasons. Milk has never given me food poisoning. Yet on a number of occasions, I have suffered from symptoms associated with food poisoning as a direct result of drinking beer. The Government does not discriminate against minorities, so can I expect beer to be banned, or will it merely be heat treated to remove the dangerous alcohol?

Rob Jonson, Balliol College, Oxford OX1 3BJ. AS someone who has been on numerous "blind dates", I take exception to Rochelle Morton's article (This woman has dated 700 men. Is she mad? February 3) — not only to the impression she gives that most men who answer lonely hearts ads are "weird" in some way, but also to the fact that, as someone with a boyfriend, she treated the whole thing as an experiment to put in a book for commercial ends and wasted the time of a lot of men in the process. Richard Cohen, 118 Sinclair Road, London W14 0NL.

REGARDING Australia's efforts to become a republic (Up from under the Crown, Leader, February 3), Australia's membership of the Commonwealth does far more for us than high, crumbling brick walls, which once contained fruit and vegetable beds, melon, peach and strawberry houses, are local varieties of apples and cherries amongst ranks of container-grown shrubs, poly-tunnels and netting screens shielding young camellias, magnolias and azaleas from desiccating cold.

VIRGINIA SPIERS



Musical airs

DESPITE Andrew Clements's praise for the Great Composers series (Arts, January 20) he is off-kilter when he says it is hard to remember any other serious music documentaries on BBC Television recently.

He wrote this opinion in a week when BBC2 screened a tribute to Sir Michael Tippett. May we also remind him of three other recent series — Mark Wigglesworth's Everything To Play For, Sir George Martin's The Rhythm Of Life, and Jonathan Miller's Opera World — which scored well with public and press alike.

This month's Yo-Yo Ma/Bach series is part-perfor-

mance/part-documentary and, next month, BBC Young Musicians 98 gathers tempo, with workshops and documentaries alongside the performers' competition. Omnibus also features a remarkable American experiment in teaching music to deprived children.

This must surely be music to Clements's ears. Kim Evans, Reader of Arts, Avril MacRory, Head of Classical Music, BBC Television, London W12 7RJ.

Please include a full address on all letters. We will edit them; our letters are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

Hard questions on Iraq

THE issue central to the Saddam Hussein problem is: what is acceptable under international law (Iraq denies weapons offer, February 3)?

It may be appropriate to remind Iraq — to punish the government in this way — for the failure to allow the UN's inspection teams to operate without let or hindrance. But the sacrosanct tenet of international law is that you don't try to alter domestic political arrangements (even of enemy states) covertly.

How do we know that the US and Britain are not strongly encouraging Iraqi opposition groups covertly? If they are not, it may well be because the opposition is too weak and divided to be worth cultivating.

Dr Jeff Haynes, Department of Politics & Modern History, London Guildhall University.

ELIMINATION of Saddam Hussein himself, while welcome, would only result in the elevation of his more evil son. And, were this the object, why did the US step back from supporting the coup immediately after the war? Further, it should be remembered that not only were the UK and the US happy to arm Iraq right up until 1990 but

both governments maintained a determined silence when Saddam Hussein used biological weapons against his own population.

In 1992 Harold Wilson, a founder of War on Want, stated: "Two thirds of mankind live their lives surrounded by squalor, hunger, disease, starvation, illiteracy and premature death... it is not the inevitable lot of man." Current policies make the situation described by Harold Wilson all that is inevitable for the people in Iraq. We call on all thinking people to demand a change.

Liz Philipson, Chair, War on Want, 37-39 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 0ES. WHAT if Iraq is telling the truth that it no longer possesses biological or chemical weapons? What will happen to American and British airmen who may be captured by Iraqis? What if the reaction in the Arab world becomes so intense that their pro-Western rulers are not able to contain it and the entire area is destabilised? Mohammed Arif, British Afro-Asian Solidarity Organisation, 9 Galveston Road, London SW15 2RZ.

Girl power

HEIDI Safia Mirza (All white now, Women, February 2) makes the old mistake of believing what she reads in the newspapers — in this case, about feminism. As a writer on social affairs for nearly 15 years, I find it irritating to be caricatured as a "media-babe" by someone who really ought to know better.

Heidi Safia Mirza should also realise that, Natasha Walter's book apart, the "new feminism" is largely a fictional device created by feature editors looking for a way to cover a lot of very different writers, who all happen to have published books in a slow season.

If today's black women writers are not getting the media coverage they deserve, it is really the fault of other women writers? Melissa Benn, 74 Victoria Road, London NW6 6QA.

IF THE Spice Girls have rejected being "feminist", it is not because there is something wrong with feminism, as Heidi Safia Mirza wants us to believe, but because the Spice Girls are not the least bit interested in the plight of women.

Lucie Payne, 28 Tolworth Park Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7RL.

A Country Diary

TAMAR VALLEY: Upstream from medieval Horse Bridge, beyond the northern flanks of Kirt Hill and Hingston Down, the Tamar meanders through a pastoral landscape, flat meadows extending from riverbank trees towards gently sloping hills. Easterly winds and frosty nights have cut back unseasonal January growth; grass has shrunk and fields are drab. Pared hedges show little sign of new greenness, short forms contrasting with those, as yet unfilled, tangled with last year's woody growth — slender wands, spiny spears, arching strands of briar and bramble sheltering underlying ferns, foxglove and emerging primrose. Snowdrops spill over a garden hedge opposite the round of lime trees at the entrance to Endsleigh. The letter B, carved on the lodge wall, marks it as part of the old Bedford estate. Down the long driveway, through thick-trunked, spreading rhododendrons, under oaks and tall

conifers, the big house is a private hotel. The grounds are part of a charitable trust, no longer visited by the Bedfords. They used to come regularly, accompanied by retainers, and older locals remember tales of the flying duchess, piloting her little aeroplane, and the duke's rides, brushed clear of leaves before he drove through his woods. A syndicate now controls the salmon fishing and a trust lets the cottages to tourists. Extensive coniferous woodland is managed for commercial forestry, and the walled kitchen gardens are used as a nursery and garden centre. Within these high, crumbling brick walls, which once contained fruit and vegetable beds, melon, peach and strawberry houses, are local varieties of apples and cherries amongst ranks of container-grown shrubs, poly-tunnels and netting screens shielding young camellias, magnolias and azaleas from desiccating cold.

VIRGINIA SPIERS

Diary

Emily Barr

SUDDENLY, the world seems to be a much more interesting place. In a paperback, entitled *The Tenth Muse*, by a gentleman of that name ("the author of *Private Parts* and *Public Places*"). The cover shows a woman in a state of some undress, and the blurb begins, enticingly, "Hear the one about the peer, the vicar and the vicar's wife? Not this one, you haven't." Interested to know whether sales have been affected by the glacial pace of the book, we tracked Mr. Cook down to New York. "You know," he mused, "I have heard of Robin Cook in England and I've often thought of writing to him and suggesting we meet up. Which of my books have you got there? Well, you know what's happened? That's actually another Robin Cook. He spent a lot of his time in France — he had quite an ugly face. In fact a French paper published his photo when he died." This Robin Cook, it transpires, is a well-known thriller writer. We hereby launch the *Quest for the Robin Cooks*. The first 10 readers to write in with proof (and I mean proof) that this is their name will each receive a bottle of champagne in consolation.

I AM entranced by a contribution to the Clinton debate in the Times. Journalist Heidi Kingstone writes of the night she met Bill at Downing Street. Such was the pair's delight in each other that she concludes as follows: "Mr Clinton had to be dragged away by his aides. He was still talking to me about Canada as the crowds separated us. Had he come on to me, would I have said him for sexual harassment? I doubt it." Ms Kingstone is the estranged wife of David Montgomery, the Mirror group chief executive, so we called to ask who she had in mind when she wrote that shortly before she and the president met. "A man," she said, "and I mean proof." She said something and Mr Clinton's generally well-concealed boredom peeped through. "Neither the President nor I can come to the phone at the moment," reported her answerphone.

A N advert in Monday's *Guardian* read: "Director of Communications; Merseyvalley; £54,000." It went on: "Our vital work is frequently misunderstood and misrepresented in the country at large. That's where you come in." In the week when an enquiry heard claims about drugs and pornography being rife there, perhaps it's an apt time for Ashworth Hospital to be recruiting a communications director. At Ashworth, Anne Donahoe insists that response has been "Good — we've had 20 people ringing in so far. I thought you were another."

I T is cheering, in these times, to stumble across examples of probity, and we have done just that. John Maples, now shadow health secretary, was retained by the G-Tech led by his bid consortium (prior to his re-election last May) in order to help them with access to the government. Richard Branson revealed that G-Tech's Guy Snowden had tried to bribe him on Panorama. Jane Corbin is a Panorama reporter and Jane Corbin is married to John Maples!

M EANWHILE, appeals are being made by the friends of Neil Hamilton, who needs money for another libel battle. Lord Harris of High Cross writes to the Telegraph to ask like-minded people to help Neil clear his name. Anyone can contribute to the fund that will allow him to sue Channel 4, Fulcrum Productions and Mohamed Al-Fayed over a Dispatches broadcast last year. Legal experts suggest that, under something called Maintenance Proceedings, anyone contributing could get stuck with a hefty bill — in the unlikely event, that is, of Neil losing.

D UTCH pilot Wim De Jins has been jailed for four months, reports PHM, simply for singing as he landed his plane. Wim was convicted of endangering air safety when his rousing rendition of *The Flintstones* jammed the air traffic control frequency for 20 minutes.



Britain's problem with corruption

Commentary
Jonathan Freedland

R ETURNING to Britain after spending most of the mid-1990s abroad has involved a fair amount of catching up. There are several features of today's cultural landscape which popped up while I was away, whose evolution I did not experience first hand. I had to read about the Blair-Oasis battle of the bands from across the Atlantic, along with the Scott Report, the creation of the Premiership and the fall and rise of Mr Bloop.

Two other phenomena appeared while I was gone. One was the epic TV drama, *Our Friends in the North*. The other was the National Lottery. I have done my best to keep up on both, and the events of the last two days have made me glad I did. For besides being the gripping tale of four childhood

chums and a pretty robust social history of contemporary Britain, *Our Friends in the North* also illuminated one of the hidden strands in our national life: corruption. The saga starts in the sixties with Austin Donohue, the once-idealistic local Labour boss who dreams of building "streets in the sky" but ends up blighting the horizon with high-rise slums, his palm greased with a few bob from a dodgy developer. In London the malaise spreads to the Metropolitan Police, where bent coppers are on the payroll of pimps and pornographers — eventually rigging their own internal investigation. By the 1980s there's a corruption problem, has been vividly confirmed, right here right now.

The National Lottery has been exposed as a glorified cash-machine, operated in part by a shyster outfit which thought nothing of offering a bribe to a British billionaire who has turned his reputation for personal integrity into a brand. (If the jury hadn't got Guy Snowden on libel they could have got him on stupidity: what did he imagine Richard Branson could want that he hasn't already got?)

The newly-despatched regulator, Peter Davis, doubtless spent yesterday vainly explaining to Chris Smith why he was not much cleaner. Westminster has, rightly, been exercised by tales of big bungs — from cash-for-questions to Formula One — but a vicious river of sleaze trickles along the corridors of local government, too. Paisley, Doncaster and Hull have all been named.

The problem in local government is more deeply rooted. Corruption in Britain's town halls reflects the poverty of our local democracy: councils are so atrophied, kickbacks are often the only way to get things done, says our unnamed official — recalling the T Dan Smith/Austin Donohue philosophy of government. The establishment in London, MPs and journalists alike, don't take local politics seriously, thereby relieving dodgy councils of the scrutiny that would force them to clean up their act. A kind of condescension exists which regards the councillors of Labour one-party states as a wayward tribe with their own customs — where looser rules apply.

Those authorities can be purged, but wider change is needed. We have shed the myth of our own incorruptibility. We have long assumed corruption to be a faraway malady — endemic in Italy or Latin America, but hardly a worry here. That attitude probably makes matters worse, creating a sense of holier-than-thou probity which barred many from seeing the corruption all around them. Like Mr Davis, we cannot make that excuse now.

But the problem spreads across the country. "I know a large part of the Labour Party in local government is run by gangsters," says one Labour council official. He cites the office blocks that magically appear in city centres only to lie empty — often the fruit of the "too cosy relationship between planners and developers". That British corruption exists is plain to see; more in-

teresting is the explanation for it. A standard left response is to blame the culture of deregulation, the get-rich-quick ethos which allowed a G-Tech or one of football's sheep-skin sharks to bend the rules. A more subtle is the view that the end of trade unionism has fostered a new, aggressive individualism. Employees used to get more money through collective bargaining, now they have to fiddle their expenses or rake off a slice for themselves.

The FA believes £46,000 found its way into Clough's wallet following a two-player exchange in 1989. Racing is also in the dock, with three jockeys arrested last week amid assorted allegations of horse-doping and race-fixing designed to please the bookies.

The veteran villains of corruption drama also returned to the stage last week, as word came of a "ghost squad" planted within the Met to root out a new generation of bent coppers. Up to 250 crooked policemen are under investigation, accused, like their predecessors, of running "a firm within a firm". Political life is not much cleaner. Westminster has, rightly, been exercised by tales of big bungs — from cash-for-questions to Formula One — but a vicious river of sleaze trickles along the corridors of local government, too. Paisley, Doncaster and Hull have all been named.

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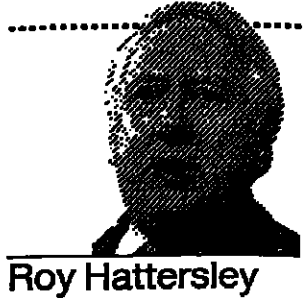
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COMMENT AND ANALYSIS 9

Quite squalid, prurient and ridiculous



Roy Hattersley

LAST Wednesday afternoon, I was minding my own business in Millbank when a member of the shadow cabinet — to whom I had previously barely spoken — fell into step beside me. We had both just witnessed Prime Minister's Question Time and, sitting on the Opposition front bench, he had noticed me looking down from the gallery.

"Not one of William's better days," he told me. I was about to explain that better was a relative term and I had no idea whether Hague was as weary as he said he was, but that afternoon, the Shadow Minister did not pause for breath. "One problem," he said, "is that William is still running for President of the Oxford Union."

I would have told him that there was no hope of Hague being elected to anything, but I realised that he would not have taken any notice if I had warned him that his trousers were on fire. My task was to listen, not to talk. I was performing the function of parliamentary therapist. "William has more in common with Harold Wilson than a Yorkshire accent," my patient continued. "He's terrified of the party splitting and, since we can't agree about anything positive, he won't talk about policy if he can help it. Policy will have to wait for election year."

Thanks to the despairing shadow minister, I understood why — as the United States prepared to bomb Baghdad — the United Kingdom played itself in as President of the European Union and the chronic diseases of civil war and famine spread in Africa — the Leader of the Opposition chose to spend that afternoon questioning the Prime Minister about a subject on the margin of foreign affairs. By demanding to know why Douglas Hurd's personal choice of diary secretary had not been acceptable to Robin Cook, Hague could unite his troops around the banner of prurient trivia. But the real reason for Hague's choice was fear of trusting his backbenchers with anything except the small change of politics.

It is the duty of Parliament to expose ministerial wrong doing, and governments possess a special duty to be unreasonably severe with corrupt members. Clement Attlee certainly thought so. He sacked and publicly humiliated a parliamentary secretary who had accepted a free case of whisky.

But it is not possible to be the hammer of corruption if there is no corruption to hammer. And sniffing about in the hope of exposing imaginary petty scandals makes the Opposition look both squalid and ridiculous. The party of Churchill and Macmillan has tried to pick fights over the cost of wallpaper, the guest list at Downing Street parties and the status of ministers' companions on foreign visits. Perhaps the Prime Minister should not have allowed himself to become provoked into calling the Opposition "useless" and "pathetic". But those are the appropriate adjectives to describe its recent performance. None of the grubbing about with imaginary scandals would have mattered had it been confined to buccaneering nonentities who care more for next day's headlines than for long term reputation. By getting himself involved in the backwaters of politics, Hague demonstrates his reluctance to risk his just thought of the stream of ideological debate. Great changes are taking place in the political structure of this country. While Blair leads a brand new party inspired by brand new beliefs, the Leader of the Opposition worries about who writes the date of Cabinet meetings in the Foreign Secretary's diary.

AND his shadow ministers follow his lead by assiduously avoiding the great issues of the day. John Maples accuses Frank Dobson of packing hospital trusts with Labour supporters — and finds that he cannot substantiate the charge. Andrew MacKay announces (as if he had just thought of the idea) that difficult decisions have to be taken about who should participate in the Irish peace process — but offers no advice about what they should be. Norman Fowler responds to Eurostar's inactivity with a plea for the nation to renounce Labour support for the Tories' decision to award the contract to that company. The Opposition is united by a determination not to think.

Most demeaning of all, John Redwood, who is supposed to be the intellectual among Tory blockheads — investigates the bank balances of Labour ministers. He seems far more interested in what they earned and saved before polling day than how they are governing the country. So, despite Redwood's lofty reputation as prophet of New Conservatism, his demands for resignations deserve and receive the same hoarse laugh that we give to Michael Howard when he describes Robin Cook as unfit to be a minister. The Government rushes on like a footballer who, having avoided a feeble attempt to tap his ankles, scores while his would-be assailant lies forlorn on the pitch. No wonder that shadow minister was near to hysteria.

Peter Davis: it certainly seems to be you

Clare Sambrook

PETER Davis turned on his heel and swept away from Court 13. Guy Snowden's lawyers looked bemused. With an impetuous toss of his head, Davis boomed: "I said that the one time I didn't want to be called was lunchtime today and tomorrow morning. I am not hugely pleased."

Maybe that accounted for the lottery regulator's poor performance in the witness box last week. He denied claims by Richard Branson and others that the day after Camelot won the lottery, Branson had informed the regulator of Snowden's

chummy attempt at bribery. "There was a moment when Mr Branson said some complimentary things to me about G-Tech," he told the court. "I interrupted him. This was an inappropriate subject for informal conversation." It was "not a significant part of the conversation". There was no mention of a bribe, he said. We now know that just hours before meeting Branson, Davis had warned Camelot's chairman, Sir Ron Dearing, that G-Tech's style of getting lottery contracts in America "would not be appropriate in the UK".

Why he said this after appointing Camelot is baffling. In evidence, he denied any suggestion of back-passing.

People who came across Davis, an accountant, during his blighted business career would recognise a familiar mix of dilatoriness and bluster in the lottery affair, in which he lost his job last night. He had been financial controller of Harris Queensway, the carpet company that collapsed through lack of financial control. Davis left with a pay-off and missed the final drama.

By then he was finance chief at Sturge, the Lloyd's underwriters who lost more than £1 billion. He was criticised by Lloyd's regulators for being a poor attendee at meetings. He left Lloyd's with a golden goodbye — a £182,000 pay-off. Then he

landed the lottery regulator's job. The Conservative government wanted someone with commercial experience who would be acceptable to the big corporations who'd run the lottery — and all for a £20,000 civil service salary. They got a commercial operator unfamiliar with the public service ethos.

He was quick to show his ineptitude in public life by taking freebies during an official trip. One was a G-Tech helicopter ride, with his wife, to the Long Island home of G-Tech's biggest investor. It was a "personal visit", he explained in court; the investor's wife was an old friend of Mrs Davis — the pair had

attended antenatal classes together. Davis was not slow in showing a little commercial acumen, however, by landing two £20,000-a-year directorships soon after taking on the lottery job. One was with the Provvy as City folk know it — Provident Financial, the company that charges more than 60 per cent annual equivalent rates to people too poor to borrow from the banks. "That's not," one mandarin sniffed to me, "something a mandarin would do." The public service ethos was out of style when the Conservatives put Peter Davis in his job. When this Government names his successor, they could have a go at bringing it back.

discrimination law. They'll test against every threat to retirement income — from the removal of tax relief on private health care for the elderly to the loss of tax credits for pension schemes, and especially Harriet Harman's suggested affluence testing of benefits. Naturally they want the universal pension greatly increased for rich and poor alike. There are ideological politics in all of this — only inter-generational rivalry.

Now of course all this is only part of the story. The Full Monty eloquently tells all there is to know about being thrown on the scrapheap in middle age with no job, no

qualifications, no money, no life. The numbers out of work over the age of 50 are legion — and many are hidden. Of the "economically inactive" 50 to 64-year-olds, only one in eight is officially registered unemployed — the rest are the disappeared, often officially sick to suit the figures and their pockets, but really only sick because they can't get work.

These two truths about my generation sit side by side — the haves and have-nots in money, work and power. The reason I am uneasy about the idea of an anti-discrimination law is that it is weaves who would use it, not the Full Montys.

The problem of the unhappy redundant needs urgent attention. If they were out committing mayhem, mugging young people or peddling their Tenazapan sleeping pills to primary school kids, you can bet they'd be as high a priority as the young unemployed. From June, the New Deal will include anyone of any age unemployed for a year. Will as much money and effort be spent on rescuing the despairing but passive older workers as is poured into young potential trouble-makers?

The third age movement, devoted to finding work, activity, education, volunteering and meaning for the lives of the unwillingly retired, shows what can be done. But the cost-benefit will be harder to calculate than with the young — a matter of happiness not economics.

We're all young now



On her return to this newspaper, columnist **Polly Toynbee** dissects the pretensions of a generation which believes itself ageless

I T STANDS to reason, doesn't it? After laws against racism, sexism and handicappism, the next frontier must be ageism. On Friday a private member's bill calls for the banning of age discrimination in job ads. In support of it, 56-year-old model Pearl Read flaunts her Wonderbra with pride in an Age Concern poster, at a time of life when she'd have counted herself lucky to do the Damart catalogue. Outed in a tabloid as a gangster's moll, Pearl's gangster's moll only adds zest to Age Concern's message — it's OK to be a wild old thing.

The age lobby is indignant that the Government has reneged on its earlier promise. Only six months before the election, the official policy was: "Labour will make age discrimination in employment illegal, ensuring that everyone, whatever their age, has the chance to work." Instead the Government is about to announce a voluntary code of conduct for employers. A voluntary code was tried in America, but proved utterly ineffective until passed into law.

But anti-ageist laws will come. By the time my generation reaches retirement in 10 to 15 years, we shall have anti-discrimination laws as strong as those in America. For we will refuse to go. Those of us in jobs we cherish will hold on to them until we drop. We are the postwar Bulge Babies (as we were inel-

egantly called before the more flattering Americanism "Baby Boomer"), and we've always had everything our way. The NHS was created as the cradle for our monster generation. The Butler Education Act nurtured us. Our childhood blossomed in a full-employment boom. A swathe of plate glass new universities greeted us as we left school. When we were young, the whole world was forced to be young with us. Our mass youth culture flourished because we were flush with money that the young had never had before. It never occurred to us that jobs were not there for the taking. We always had it easy.

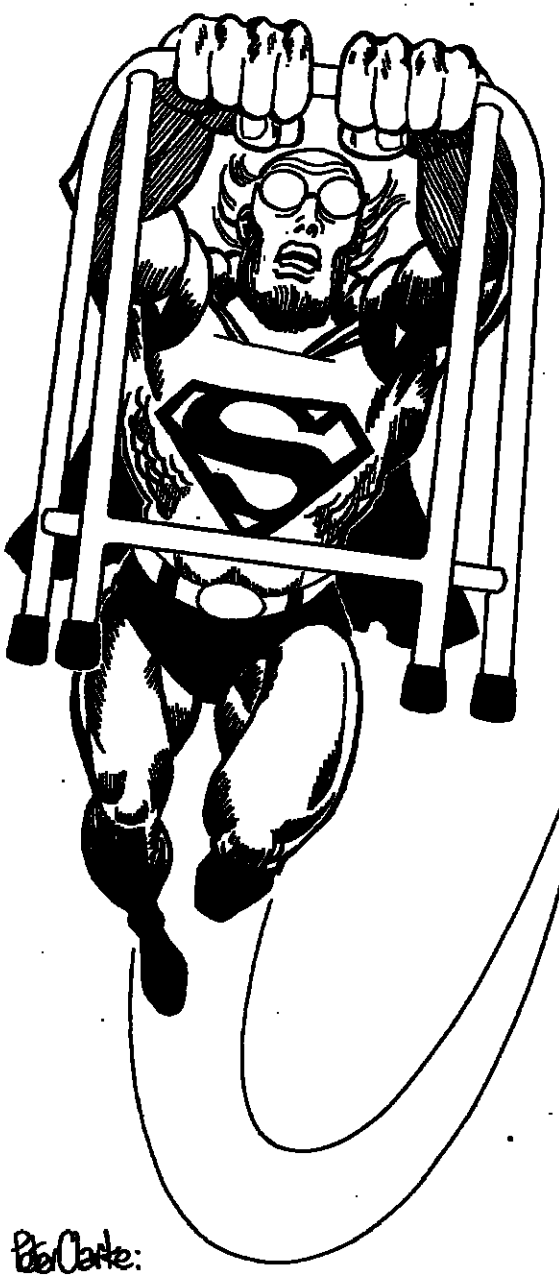
In generations, size really counts and we are the biggest — as voters, as spenders, as owners of property and pension funds. In middle age we're the first to inherit capital from parents' homes in significant numbers. Each decade we've rolled back the idea of what it is to be old: we

won't go gracefully. At 40 we behaved as our parents did at 30. At 50, we're still rocking. Mick Jagger will still fill Wembley when he's jumping Jack Zimmer. So, you can bet we'll outlast ageism in time to hold on to everything we've got. And we shall all live longer: average longevity is increasing by one extra year every three years. Our grey power will grow and grow.

The young should take fright at any attempt to bring in American-type legislation here. Our children are having a far harder time getting started in life than we had and they shouldn't let us keep the best jobs forever. Campaigners have been quick to say it's not a zero-sum game — employing the old doesn't deny the young jobs.

But Professor Alan Walker, leading expert on all this, admits that of course it would. Instead he stresses that there will soon be a shortage of skilled young workers, so employers will have to turn back to the old. In which case the market will sort it out. Already the young will have to pay our pensions and our care, lumbered with our improvidence since we never paid into a genuine national insurance fund.

In America, 33 million old people belong to the Association of Retired Persons, and it has the politicians in the palm of its hand. The old here are only just beginning to assert their muscle, but the young should be wary of how our influence will grow. What is this lobby demanding? Britain's Association of Retired Persons wants a blanket anti-



Beate

Will as much money and effort be spent on rescuing the despairing but passive older workers?

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Chain reaction... for Tyler Scott, the gritty industrialism of Bradford is redolent of mountain biking adventure — and the best in billiard tables

PHOTOGRAPHS: DON MCFEE



The name of the frame

Bradford pedals new image in US

Martin Wainwright

MARKETEERS use names such as Rocky Ridge and Pine Mountain to evoke the mountain bike's image of freedom and adventure. But Huffy, the world's largest bicycle manufacturer, has been inspired by the Yorkshire industrial centre of Bradford in naming its latest 18-speed model.

Tyler Scott, who as product manager at Huffy was responsible for the naming, said yesterday: "I was lucky enough to study at Bradford university for a year in the 1980s. And I've never forgotten the city's character, not to mention the curries, rugby league and Tufley's beer."

The \$150, midnight-blue bike is aimed at the lower end of the mountain-bike market in the US.

Mr Tyler, aged 33 and from Kentucky, said: "It's got the look of what we think of as an 'English bike' and I didn't want to name it after somewhere big but relatively bland like London."

The Bradford is not for sale in Britain, where Huffy has little market penetration, but Mr Tyler has sent one machine to his old university for a raffle in aid of the Lord Mayor of Bradford's charity appeal.

Bradford is back in the frame for Mr Scott's new job, manufacturing billiard tables in Chicago. "We've just named our latest line the Bradford Table."

Trail blazers

Some of the Bradford's rivals:

- Santa Fe
- Seattle
- San Jose
- Rocky Ridge
- Bobcat Trail
- Hawk Hill
- Outpost
- Arrowhead
- Apache
- San Rafael
- Point Reyes
- Indian Fire Trail
- Pedals
- Bear Valley
- Pine Mountain
- Rift Zone
- Oakland

BSkyB delays digital push

Simon Beavis
Media Business Editor

BSKYB admitted yesterday that the launch of its British digital television service will be six months later than planned.

The UK company — 40 per cent owned by Rupert Murdoch — said that it would not be up and running until the autumn, although it would begin selling set-top decoder boxes in June. It had promised to launch in the spring.

In another setback, BSKyB also whipped up a row over the supply of Premiership football for BDB — the rival digital TV service planned by Carlton and Granada — into a full-blown legal dispute yesterday by serving a writ for the recovery of £30 million from Carlton.

The admission came as BSKyB announced that over £100 million of spending on digital satellite TV had led to a dip in first-half profits, a forecast of flat profits for the year and a decision to leave interim dividends unchanged.

But there was a positive response in the City, which took heart that the £5 million dip to £128.6 million in pre-tax profits was less severe than expected. The shares jumped sharply, up 18p to 361p.

Mark Booth, the man brought in late last year to replace Sam Chisholm as chief executive, promised that digital would revolutionise TV and make analogue services look like "yesterday". BSKyB needs digital to lift flagging analogue.

Figures released yesterday showed that the number of new subscribers fell to 349,000 from 581,000 in the same

period last year and the churn rate — the number of lost customers — was running at an unusually high 15.4 per cent, an increase of 6 per centage points.

But Mr Booth admitted that June's initial launch would be little more than a pilot and that the main effort would go into pushing the service in the pre-Christmas market. "We are going to have a modest launch in June but the meaningful one will be in the fourth quarter," he said.

He said that the set top boxes and decoders needed to convert digital signals into

pictures — put on sale in June would probably be adapted and enhanced progressively.

The autumn push on digital satellite — which will have 150 channels dedicated to TV and 50 to audio services — puts BSKyB right alongside BDB, which is also clinging to the idea of an autumn launch for its rival 30-channel digital terrestrial service.

BSkyB's legal run in with Carlton showed all the signs of worsening yesterday as it was revealed that the company had agreed to pay up its £30 million to the satellite group in compensation for BSKyB being forced by Brussels to quit BDB.

A Carlton spokesman said: "BSkyB has made no progress in arranging Premier League football rights for Digital terrestrial. They have repeatedly said they will do so but so far have made no progress."

Mr Booth said he was prepared for a legal battle but he could not imagine BDB launching without Sky programming.

equal partner in BDB and an 11.1 per cent shareholder in BSKyB — had agreed to pay up its £30 million to the satellite group in compensation for BSKyB being forced by Brussels to quit BDB.

A Carlton spokesman said: "BSkyB has made no progress in arranging Premier League football rights for Digital terrestrial. They have repeatedly said they will do so but so far have made no progress."

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Airbus wins \$2.5bn order with Iberia

Nicholas Bannister, Chief Business Correspondent

AIRBUS, Europe's biggest aircraft manufacturer, has won a \$2.5 billion (£1.51 billion) order to supply Spain's Iberia airline with 50 aircraft, with an option for a further 26 worth an extra \$1.3 billion.

Iberia, which already has a fleet of 36 Airbus, is planning to buy up to nine A319s, 36 A320s and 31 A321s. The aircraft are direct competitors of Boeing's new generation of 737s.

British Aerospace, which is involved in the planned restructuring of the Airbus consortium, yesterday played down reports that it might pull out of Aero International

Regional, a European consortium selling, marketing and providing support services for its members' regional jets.

France's Aerospatiale SNI and Italy's Aeritalia Selenia, which make the turbo-prop ATR regional airliner, are thought to be pressing for the consortium to be dismantled as part of the consolidation of the European aircraft industry.

However BAE, which makes the Avro regional jet, wants to see AIR continue as a support operation. A BAE spokesman said the partners regularly discussed the future of the consortium but no talks were going on at present. AIR, which made 72 planes last year, has a two-year backlog with orders.

Part of the logic behind a break-up of AIR is that regional jets might be better developed and marketed within the Airbus operation. Airbus is already considering making a 100-seater regional jet of its own.

Europe and DTI asked to intervene • US drugs chief says other firms will be caught in global vortex

Union calls for talks as job cuts feared

Seamus Milne

THE technical staff of Union, Manufacturing Commission and Finance, which has 5,000 members in Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham, yesterday called on both companies to consult employees about their merger, as they are obliged to do if there are plans for any redundancies.

Roger Lyons, MSF general secretary who is pressing both the European Commission and Karel van Miert and the Trade and Industry Secretary Margaret Beckett to intervene, said the case for a merger between two highly profitable companies had not been made.

"The fact that both companies have banned their employees from talking to the press and have refused to respond to requests for consultation with the trade

THE BIG MERGER

Glaxo SB

unions is a cause for great concern," Mr Lyons said. He insisted that the Government had a duty to protect the companies' science base and described the pharmaceutical industry as the "jewel in Britain's industrial crown".

MSF released correspondence from Alistair Derriman, director general of the Panel on Takeovers and Mergers, confirming that there was nothing in the panel code preventing prior consultation on mergers with trade unions.

Under European legislation, companies are obliged to consult unions on redundancies and transfers of groups of workers from one employer to another.

The unions fear large-scale job losses are planned, because of the cost-cutting potential from rationalising the two pharmaceutical firms' overlap in manufacturing, research, marketing and administration.

America sharpens healthy appetite

Swallowing is new corporate reflex, says MARK TRAN in Washington

ONE of America's leading drug companies predicts a wave of mega-mergers in the pharmaceutical industry following the \$100 billion link-up between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham.

Robert Shapiro, chairman of Monsanto, told the annual Davos meeting of international business leaders yesterday that the merger activity "will involve us and everyone else as well" as companies struggle to finance the expenditure necessary to develop new drugs in an era of genetics and biotechnology.

"As far as I can tell, every company in our industry has been talking to every other company in our industry about how we could work together."

The global market for prescription treatments is more than £180 billion a year — and one-third of those drugs are consumed in the US, the country that coined the phrase: "There's a pill for every ill." Encouraged by their system of health insurance, Americans seek panaceas in pill bottles.

Another third of the world's drugs bill is accounted for by

Europe and although the Government regularly warns of the soaring cost of the NHS drugs bill, Britons are relatively light users. Last year, Britain's drugs bill was \$5 billion, less than half the value of prescriptions issued in Germany or France.

In the US, drug companies target illnesses associated with affluence — from obesity to cholesterol, heart disease and ulcers — and, encouraged

by laws that allow drug companies to advertise their remedies direct to the consumer, Americans demand the best, and usually most expensive, treatments available.

In a culture where a high value is placed on innovation, the Americans provide drug companies with a ready outlet for their latest products.

Prozac, made by Eli Lilly, was launched in 1987 and became the leader in antidepressant drugs. It was heralded as a "happy pill" and a breakthrough drug because of the absence of side-effects associated with older rivals.

The drug became chic and even spawned a best-selling book, *Prozac Nation*. Prozac became used increasingly by people who said they needed something to overcome their anxiety or shyness in social situations.

Then there was the great melatonin craze of 1995. It started among international travellers and alternative medicine enthusiasts. But the market for pills of the hormone secreted by the pineal gland, a pea-size structure at the centre of the brain, exploded when a spate of books and articles discussed melatonin's possible health benefits.

Shops sold out of melatonin pills as researchers talked about melatonin's capacity to counter the ravages of age. In a culture where youthfulness is prized, such claims boost sales. Better yet, melatonin required no prescription.

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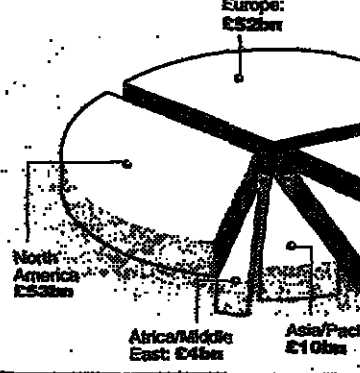
Said: "Big enough for what? The kind of genomics research being talked about, and biotechnology capability to deal with incredibly massive data bases, is big money."

"We spend about 25 per cent of sales on research. One of the ways that is going to come down is by getting larger institutions devoting a smaller percentage of their turnover [to research]."

All the world's drugs

Value of pharmaceuticals, \$bn

Total: \$161bn



Europe
 • Germany: £12bn
 • Italy: £5bn
 • France: £11bn
 • UK: £5bn
 • Others: £18bn

Government figures out way to increase jobless

The number of people officially out of work is set to increase by up to half a million from April when the Government changes the main measure of unemployment. It will focus on the internationally recognised Labour Force Survey, now published every three months, to which monthly estimates will be added using a rolling average of the quarterly statistics. Figures for those out of work and claiming benefit will still be released. *Charlotte Donny* answers questions on the new counting method

So the Government has announced a change to the unemployment figures. Presumably the statisticians have found another way of making the dole queues appear shorter?

Not this time. The Office for National Statistics has decided to switch to a different way of measuring the numbers out of work and the change will boost the official jobless total by 400,000.

How can there suddenly be nearly half a million more people out of work? Well, it all depends on how you measure unemployment. For years the Government has counted the number of people claiming benefits, first

Unemployment Benefit and now the Jobseeker's Allowance. But every time the Tories changed the rules to make it harder for people to get benefit, the number of claimants would drop, making the unemployment total look smaller.

So how does the new measure work? It's not new. As well as adding up the number of claimants once a month, the new measure will send out a survey four times a year to 60,000 households. The results tell them what percentage of the sample are employed, not in the workforce, or are looking for work, and from it they produce figures

for the whole population. Now they've decided to produce monthly estimates of the survey which will become the new official measure of unemployment.

Why is there such a gap between the two measures? The Labour Force Survey includes about a million "non-claimant" unemployed, that is people who are looking for work but aren't entitled to the Jobseeker's Allowance. Because the Jobseeker's Allowance is means-tested after six months, if someone in your household is working or you have a lot of savings, your Jobseeker's Allowance will be cut off. If you quit your job, you can't claim for six

months and most 16- and 17-year-olds aren't entitled to claim at all.

So why isn't the difference even greater? Because some people who are on benefit aren't classified as out of work according to the Labour Force Survey. You can work a few hours a week and still claim Jobseeker's Allowance, but if you do even one hour's work, you are classified as in work under the Labour Force Survey.

Now I'm really confused. Just tell me straight, which is the better measure? The statisticians have always said the claimant count is perfectly accurate, in fact more accurate in some ways, because it is based on a head-count not a survey. The problem is what it is measuring — the number of people entitled to claim unemployment bene-

fit — keeps changing, which opens it up to charges of political interference. Every time the Government makes the benefit rules stricter, the statisticians have to recalculate the last 20 years of unemployment figures to take account of the change.

What's to stop the Government fiddling with the Labour Force Survey measure in the same way? The Labour Force Survey is based on an internationally agreed definition of unemployment — people out of work who have looked for a job in the last four weeks. The definition hasn't changed since 1984 and because it is calculated in the same way internationally, it provides a better comparison for jobless rates in different countries.

Why has the Government agreed to a change which

will make the total look worse? Well, after years of denouncing the Tories for massaging the statistics, it could hardly go on using the same figures itself. Though, to be fair, it was the previous government which set up the review of the labour market statistics which led to this announcement.

So everybody should be happy then? Not exactly. Independent statisticians think the Government is solving the problem on the cheap. The experts would have preferred them to do the survey every month rather than taking a monthly average from a three-monthly survey. The margin of error in the estimations will be very high. But the Government has pleaded poverty, claiming it can't afford the £10 million price tag of a monthly survey.

Allegations hit Reuters

SHARES in Reuters Holdings fell 5 per cent yesterday as a US subsidiary of the news wire became further embroiled in allegations of stealing information from a competitor. A New York consulting firm, Cyberspace Research Associates, was mentioned in the US press as suspected of working with Reuters Analytics to obtain information about computer systems at arch-rival Bloomberg.

The government has obtained more than 100 written communications between Reuters Analytics and Cyberspace Research, including documents in which it is claimed Cyberspace Research was requested to obtain information about Bloomberg's technical programmes for analysing investments. — *Mark Tran in New York*

Rod Stewart swings loan

VETERAN rocker Rod Stewart is closing in on a \$10 million (£6.69 million) loan backed by a steady stream of royalties after the pioneering efforts of David Bowie to tap the capital markets. Under the latest deal, expected to be finalised in a few weeks, Mr Stewart will receive the cash in a lump sum while pledging the royalty stream as collateral for the loan. Nomura (Asset Capital Corporation) plans to make such loans to artists, then group them into a portfolio and offer them to investors as asset-backed securities. — *Mark Tran in Washington*

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Ramsden fury over press attack, page 13
England's top-order headache, page 15

Zola stays blue until 2002, page 14
Battle to thaw Paris pitch, page 15

SportsGuardian

Countdown to Trinidad: England pitch in



Under-covers operation... Mike Atherton takes a break from net practice to inspect the wicket at Queen's Park Oval, where the second Test against West Indies begins tomorrow. After last week's debacle at Sabina Park, England's captain was presumably checking whether this track in Port of Spain is all it is cracked up to be. PHOTOGRAPH: LAURENCE GRIFFITHS

Boxing in turmoil: King gets the brush-off and Collins the judge's decision. John Rawling reports

Tyson turns on his handlers

MIKE TYSON is reported to have sacked his management team and told the promoter Don King he no longer wishes to fight for him after a bust-up outside the plush Bel Air hotel in Los Angeles.

According to eye witnesses Tyson had to be physically restrained from attacking King after he had aimed a slap at the 66-year-old promoter.

Reports suggest Tyson has dismissed his long-time co-managers John Horne and Rory Holloway. Bob Arum, one of King's promotional rivals, said: "Three different sources whom I trust have told me that outside the Bel Air hotel Tyson threatened Horne and he told Holloway he had no use for him either."

Britain's leading promoter Frank Warren added: "I am told from a very good source that he [Tyson] slapped King and bruised his face. Then as King went to remonstrate, Tyson kicked out and had to be pulled off by minders."

King has promoted Tyson since 1988, and masterminded a comeback believed to have earned the boxer well over \$200 million (£125 million) since he was released from jail after serving three years for a rape conviction.

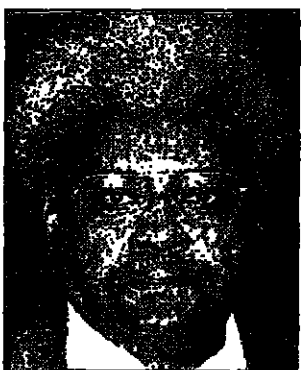
Tyson is currently banned from boxing until June at the earliest for biting Evander Holyfield's ear in their World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation world heavyweight title fight in Las Vegas last June. However, he remains the most marketable figure in

boxing and a third fight with Holyfield would gross more than \$100 million according to experts.

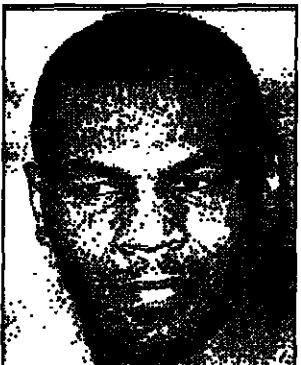
Tyson is understood to be bound to King by a lifetime promotional agreement. His fights are screened by the American cable television network Showtime, whose executive producer Jay Larkin is believed to be acting as a go-between for King in an effort to heal the rift with his fighter. Last night Larkin said: "I am allowed to say absolutely nothing about this."

Rarely can a silence have said so much.

Although Tyson has been boxing's dominant figure for more than a decade, it is rumoured that he has money problems and tax debts, and is holding King responsible for his cash-flow problems.



King... 'a slap in the face'



Tyson... bust-up in Bel Air

Hearn hurt in court knockout

STEVE COLLINS finally became master of his own destiny when he established his financial independence from the ring yesterday.

The former World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight champion began an impromptu celebration in Dublin last night after an Irish High Court judge ruled against the promoter Barry Hearn in a contract dispute.

Collins would have faced an estimated £2 million payout had he lost the case brought by Hearn and his Matchroom organisation for an alleged breach of a managerial agreement. For Hearn, once pre-eminent in the sport, it represents another setback in a long line of blows to his prestige.

As he left the court, Collins said: "This was my hardest fight because it was not my normal arena. It is like a ton of bricks off my shoulders but I was never worried."

Hearn was Collins's manager when he beat Chris Eubank to take the WBO title in Millstreet in March 1995, and claimed the fighter had extended that deal for a year from May 1995. During that time, Collins won three fights under Frank Warren's promotional umbrella: a return match with Eubank and successful defences against the British challengers Cornelius Carr and Neville Brown.

Hearn claimed that, as his manager, he was owed 25 per cent of Collins's ring earnings.

and argued his point in a bitter 26-day hearing before Christmas. But in a reserved judgment, Mr Justice Philip O'Sullivan declared Hearn had fundamentally breached his managerial responsibilities to Collins and was owed nothing.

The judge said he will make a court order on costs later, but if they are awarded against Hearn it will add insult to injury for the man who was once top dog in British boxing.

Collins has said his costs have run to more than £500,000. A string of world champions, including Collins, Eubank, the former World Boxing Council super-middleweight champion Nigel Benn and the WBO heavyweight title holder Herbie Hide, had their careers guided from Hearn's offices in Romford, Essex.

Now, with the balance of power firmly in the hands of his rival Warren, who benefits from a potent alliance with Eskey, Hearn is left to fight for promotional scraps.

After yesterday's ruling he said: "It is a bad day at the races. I am disappointed, obviously, but these things happen. I shall go home and lick my wounds and see where I am going from there."

Hearn, who may appeal against the verdict, has made no suggestion that he may consider quitting boxing, but Warren's organisation is braced for the possibility of Collins reversing his October decision to retire, prior to his court battle.

Burger kings, perfect pies, terrible tea



Jim White

THE only connection the Ivy, that swanky London restaurant much favoured by theatrical tycoons, has previously enjoyed with football is that this is the place Tim Rice favours for his pre-match meal before popping up to Highbury.

Until yesterday that is, when, at a packed news conference at the Ivy the first winner of the Colman's Football Food Award was announced. John Motson handed over the trophy and the winning club, Cambridge United, supplied the buffet. It was one of those mornings, as camera crews jostle with press photographers for the best view of a meal-and-potato pie, that you realised how popular football has become: anything connected with it, no matter how peripheral, is now regarded as hot news.

I was one of the group of iron-constituted tasters who, between us, ventured around all 90 English league grounds and Wembley, testing the fare, and I can confirm Cambridge deserved the only trophy they will land this year, for a winning combination of friendly service and quality food at a reasonable price.

Huddersfield were runners-up, and Rochdale, Chesterfield, Charlton and Hartlepool took the European places. A penalty eat-off with the baguettes at Marseille and the bratwurst at Dortmund must be on the agenda.

Below the top 10, the competition wasn't strong. It soon became clear that to be a member of the Colman's team does not entail the same perks available to inspectors for the Michelin guide. In general, Premiership clubs concentrate on the more profitable executive market, leaving the ordinary fan with second best: industrialised fare churned out with little thought.

Does that sound a familiar pattern in modern football? Thus the food gems tended to be in the lower divisions where, at places like Notts County, it is more like catering for a large dinner party. Though that does not mean all the lower clubs are culinary finds. At several the food was an irrelevance. Assessing the half-time tea at Doncaster is a bit like asking Mrs Lincoln how she enjoyed the play. As

we snorkled round the U-bend of the culinary experience the following questions arose:

1. Are the staff at food outlets at grounds contractually obliged to be taken by surprise by half-time?
2. What's wrong with serving tea in a polystyrene cup with a lid, rather than a lid-less plastic number that welds itself to the palm and appears to be timed to implode just before you reach the seat, tipping scalding liquid on to the knees of a seven-foot skinhead?
3. Why is there never any salt?
4. Why are football grounds the only ones in the world to melt into a formless gloop on impact with heat?
5. Why are the vegetarian options generally confined to the centre-circle?
6. What is that orange-coloured, plastic-like substance they put on top of the meat when you order a cheeseburger?
7. What are you supposed to do with your teabag?
8. Why, on warm afternoons, is the Coke served at a temperature warmer than the tea?
9. Why do the staff always serve the bloke who has just pushed in front of you?
10. Is there no life beyond the burger?
11. Why is there never anything near the food counters to let you elbow around as you graze, or even a shelf to pop your cup on while you co-ordinate the tea-bag shuffle?
12. What's wrong with real milk?
13. Why, when they must have a fair idea of tickets sales, do football caterers run out of stock before kick-off?
14. Why is nowhere open inside grounds selling refreshments after the game?
15. Who started the opportunistic tax on away fans which means they have to pay more for the same fare than home supporters?
16. Why are the authorities so worried about fans having an alcoholic drink within view of the pitch?
17. Has no one heard of trays?
18. Why are the food outlets invariably situated right next to the urinals?
19. Which food-labelling authority consistently fails to spot that football ground mustard and ketchup are made up solely of water and colouring?
20. And finally, this geezer who ate all the pies: how is he still alive?

Apparently, the award is set to become biennial. But I have the feeling that when the organisers ask me if I want to join the team for a second bite at the burger, my internal organs might well be otherwise engaged.

Foodie table, page 4

Fewer than 20 employees? Have your say on a law that could affect your business and help disabled people.

The Disability Discrimination Act protects disabled people against discrimination. The employment part of the Act currently affects companies with 20 or more staff, but the Government is consulting on whether this limit should be lowered to cover smaller organisations like your own. To have your say, get hold of a consultation document by calling 0345 622 633, textphone 0345 622 644 quoting SEG1, or fill in this coupon and send it to DDA Information Line, FREEPOST MID 02164 Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9BR.

Name _____ Address _____
Telephone _____ Postcode _____

DDA

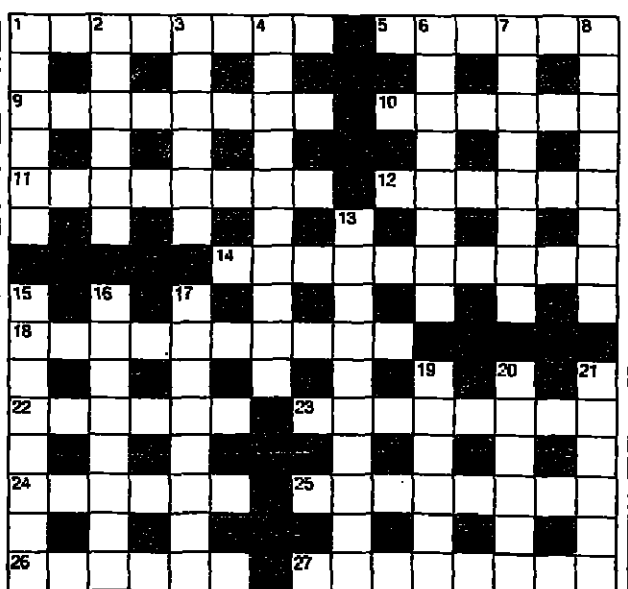
SEG1

Middle-aged people do not want to grow old in the old-fashioned way that used to be termed gracious. They want to have fun. Look at Mick Jagger, look at Goldie Hawn, look at Cher and any other number of celebrities who have carried on as if all those years were just passing sauna steam. How old is old?

G2 front

Guardian Crossword No 21,189

Set by Logodaedalus

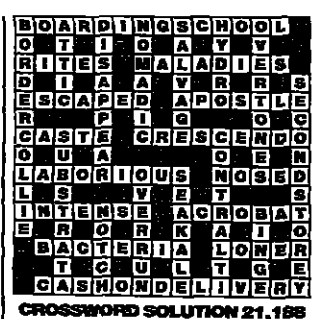


Across

- 1 Understand people concealing society's shame (8)
- 5 Request father to turn backwards and leap around (6)
- 9 PS School also taking female back (8)
- 10 One given to frowning backwards (6)
- 11 Having vision, agreed to divide a number (8)
- 12 Left after having nasty pains of the backbone (6)
- 14 Being well-known, painted the town red (10)
- 18 What's base in ice-cream gets Perry bewildered (10)
- 22 Take heart in second-class diner! (6)
- 23 Back papers in truth revealing an aid to beauty (4-4)

Down

- 1 More stupid daughter sits on behind (6)
- 2 Author of Dracula feeds the furnace (6)
- 3 I'm sour, having worked with detectives (6)
- 4 Penelope attracted to bag made for quick sale (10)
- 6 Open sesame! I do not want Macdaniel (6)
- 7 It takes a very long time to destroy tiny tree (8)
- 8 Maybe Mrs Hudson covers top of cliff with soil deposit (8)

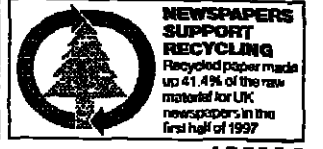


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,188

- 13 Kelly the dancer helping particular age group (10)
- 15 Plant worker during strike wants promises (8)
- 16 Filthy wood cuts not joined together (8)
- 17 Need bolt to burst? That's extremely lazy (4-4)
- 19 Extent of outside greenhouse (6)
- 20 Brilliant Edward looks shorter after climbing tree (6)
- 21 Passionate right upheld in Schubert speciality (6)

Solution tomorrow

Check? Then call our solutions line on 0901 238 238. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATS.



ABFPT